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THE
BENSTEDE FAMILY





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REMAINS OF THE KEEP, BENINGTON CASTLE, HERTS.

Latchmore, Hitchin



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BENINGTON CHURCH, HERTS, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.

Latchmore, Hitchin

THE BENSTEDE FAMILY

And its Predecessors in Hertfordshire and Essex

The De Valoignes and Balliols

by

HERBERT C. ANDREWS, M.A., F.S.A.

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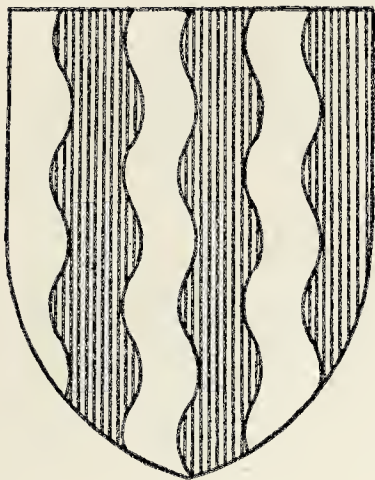
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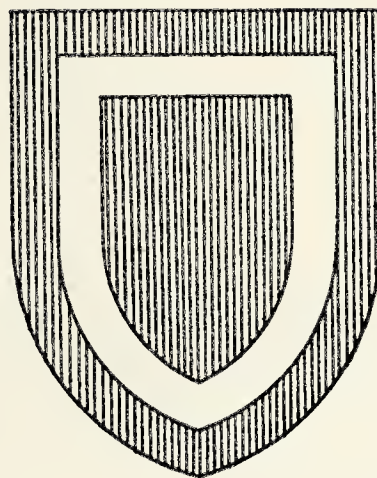
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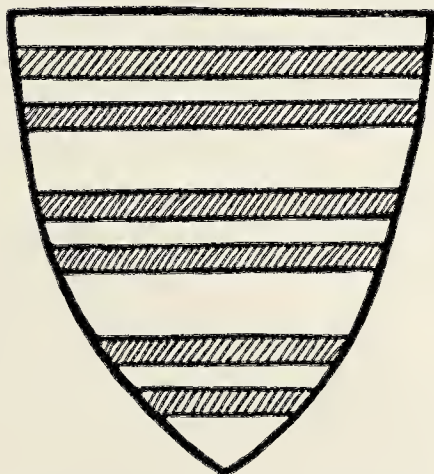
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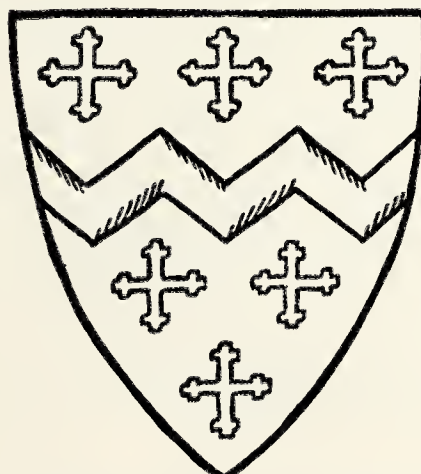
Arms of the Vâloignes
Family.



Arms of the Balliol
Family.



Arms of Benstede
Family.



Arms of the Moyne
Family.

FOREWORD

It has been my privilege to bring the notice of the Benstede family before the Walthamstow Antiquarian Society three times within the last eleven years. The first occasion was on 16 April 1926, in a lecture on *The Benstede Family*; this was followed by a visit to Benington on 25 September, the same year. The third occasion was another lecture on 8 December 1932, on *The Benstedes and other Manor Lords of Herts and Walthamstow*. I have now been invited to embody the result of my researches with additions in a monograph for the Society.

As Secretary of the East Herts Archæological Society my investigation into the history of the Benstede family has dealt mainly with that family as regards Hertfordshire, although inevitably, in order to make the record more complete, it has been necessary to consider their possessions in other counties also. The head of their barony lay in Herts at Benington, and the manor of Higham Benstede at Walthamstow and other manors in Essex were only members of their barony. Other members were situated as far afield as Cambs, Middlesex, Hants, Wilts and Devon. If therefore this record is to be complete, it must cover much ground besides Herts and Essex.

It would be a work of supererogation to give in detail an outline of the history of the manor of Higham Benstede, Walthamstow, for that was fully dealt with by G. F. Bosworth in the sixth monograph of the Walthamstow Antiquarian Society in 1919; with further references to the same manor in P. H. Reaney's *Place-names of Walthamstow*, 1930, the twenty-fourth monograph of that Society. But I must here acknowledge my indebtedness to those authors for much information which I have included; and explicit references will not be made to their works except where corrections or explanations may appear to be necessary.

In order to make the subject of this monograph more complete it is desirable to trace the history of the barony of Benington from its first Norman owners the De Valoignes family, through the Balliols, before coming to the main theme, the Benstede family.

Their family history might well have been considerably condensed by including only outlines of the various documents instead of the documents themselves *in extenso*, but this would have entailed much work for the future historian, whose labours I hope that I have lightened in thus treating my subject so fully.

H. C. A.

THE DE VALOIGNES FAMILY

ALTHOUGH the Benstede family from the fourteenth century onward are found owning some manors in Essex, Herts, and elsewhere which they acquired by marriage, purchase or gift, there were quite a number which descended to them from the Norman, Peter de Valoignes, whose holdings are recorded in the Domesday Book.

The De Valoignes family derived its name from Valoignes in the Contentin district of Normandy, eleven miles south-east of Cherbourg. Presumably Peter de Valoignes came over with Duke William and played his part in the Norman Conquest; and well was he rewarded. His share of the plunder was fifty-seven lordships; namely, twelve in Essex, seventeen in Herts, twenty in Norfolk, six in Suffolk, one in Cambridgeshire and one in Lincolnshire.¹ In Essex, they were situated at Sheering, Latton, Little Parndon, Walda (presumably North Weald), Leyton, Hecham (Higham Benstede), Loughton, Ballingdon and Bineslea (somewhere on the Suffolk border), Theydon Bois and North Weald Basset; and amounted to 32 hides 33 acres. Of these Peter had Sheering (5 hides 30 acres), Leyton (3 hides), Loughton (1 hide), and Theydon Bois (4 hides and 20 acres) in demesne, that is to say, he farmed them himself; and the others he let to various subholders.

In Herts, Peter de Valoignes acquired manors at Datchworth, Digswell, Graveley, Chells, Wollenwich, Box, Benington, Libury, Sacombe, Layston, Stonebury, Ashwell, Hinxworth, Radwell, Flexmere and Bengoe; which amounted to rather over 40 hides (4,800 acres). Nearly all these Herts manors had been the property, before the Conquest, of the Saxon thane Almar or Æthelmar, who made his home at Benington and had a park there; but the Domesday Book does not always give the names of the Saxon holders of the Essex manors. Of these Herts manors Peter held Benington, Boxe, Hinxworth, Ashwell and Stonebury himself, making Benington the head of his barony, and let the rest to various tenants.

By 1086 Peter de Valoignes had succeeded Ilbert, the first Norman sheriff, as sheriff of Essex and Herts. Probably in connection with his office he had bought a house in Hertford, and also two churches.² He was appointed Governor of Hertford Castle, and was granted by the king the manor or lordship of Hertford. He continued in great favour with succeeding monarchs.

William Rufus confirmed the grant.³ Henry I did likewise,⁴ giving him also the royal manors of Essendon and Bayford near Hertford and a house at Hertford. He probably added also Hertingfordbury manor, as it was in 1185 in the possession of Peter's widowed daughter-in-law Agnes.⁵

Peter de Valoignes married Albreda, the sister of Adam Fitz Hubert de Ryes and Eudo Dapifer, steward of Henry I. She brought him 4 hides of land in Radwell, Herts, and Almshoe manor in Ippollitts, Herts. The latter had been the property of Adam Fitz Hubert and came to Eudo until his death in 1120 and then to their sister Albreda. Probably she brought him also Symondshyde in Hatfield, which 2 hides Adam held of the Bishop of Ely.⁶

Peter and Albreda, with the concurrence of their two sons William and Roger and of Walter, Peter's nephew, gave to St. Alban's Abbey, in the days of Henry I, the manor and church of Binham, Norfolk, and thus Binham Priory was founded as a cell of that abbey. The charter of the gift mentions also Eudo's wife Rohaysia, and Hamo, Peter's nephew, and Richard his brother. This is the only mention that there appears to be of Peter's younger son William.⁷

¹ Dugdale, *English Baronage*, I, 441.

² One of these churches was probably All Saints; which his grandson Peter de Valoignes gave to Waltham Abbey.

³ Chancery Enrolments known as *Cartæ Antiquæ*. See J. H. Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. 286.

⁴ *Ibid.* ⁵ *V.C.H. Herts*, III, 463; and *The Genealogist*, VI, 5.

⁶ Both Almshoe and Symondshyde had the same subtenants, but the overlordship of Symondshyde lapsed into these subtenants.

⁷ Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, I, 343-4; quoted in Clutterbuck's *Herts*, II, 278. The De Valoignes pedigree given there (p. 277) is not entirely accurate.

In 1108 Henry I confirmed Peter in the manors of Essendon and Bayford as appurtenant to Hertford Castle, and the Hertford mills, and also the governorship of the castle itself.

Roger de Valoignes succeeded his father in both the barony of Benington and the governorship of Hertford Castle, which post the family came to regard as hereditary. In the struggle between Stephen and the Empress Matilda he is said to have been a partisan of the notorious, powerful and self-seeking Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, the Constable of the Tower of London, who extracted ever more comprehensive charters from both sides; but the only existing records show him only in connection with the empress.¹

Before the struggle commenced with the landing of the empress at Arundel on 30 September 1139, both Geoffrey de Mandeville and Roger de Valoignes had been present at the king's great court at Easter 1136. At the same time that the empress granted her first charter to Geoffrey at London in June 1141 she granted one also to Roger. This reads:

M. Imperatrix regis H. filia archiepiscopis episcopis abbatibus comitibus baronibus justiciariis vicecomitibus ministris et omnibus fidelibus suis Francis et Anglis tocius Anglie salutem. Sciatis me reddidisse et concessisse Rogero de Valoniis in foedo et hereditate sibi et heredibus suis Esendonam et Begefordiam² et molendina Heortfordie et servitium Albani de Hairon et omnes alias terras et tenaturas patris sui sicut pater suus eas tenuit die qua fuit vivus et mortuus et preter hoc quicquid modo tenet de quocunque teneat. Quare volo et firmiter precipio quod bene et in pace et honorifice et libere et quiete teneat in bosco et plano in pratis et pascuis in turbariis in via et semita in exitibus in aquis et molendinis in vivariis et stagnis in foro et navium applicationibus infra burgum et extra cum socha et saka et thol et theam in infangenethef et cum omnibus libertatibus et consuetudinibus et quietantiis cum quibus pater suus melius et quietius et liberius tenuit tempore patris mei regis Henrici et ipse post patrem. T.R[oberto] Com[ite] Gloec[estrie] et M[ilone] Gloec[estrie] et Brientio fil[io] Com[itis] et Rad[ulfo] Painel et Walchel[ino] Maminot et Humf[ido] de Buh[un] apud Westmonasterium.³

Like many other of the barons at that time Roger de Valoignes took advantage of it to strengthen the head of his barony by building there a massive castle on earthworks already thrown up. His father had probably found there some form of protective earthworks to the Saxon homestead, and had strengthened it by turning a Saxon toot-hill into a motte surmounted by a wooden tower and surrounded by a small bailey. Besides outer works Roger erected around the edge of the mound a curtain wall and within it a rectangular keep measuring externally about 44 feet by 41 feet. Its walls of flint rubble with ashlar dressings were 7 to 8 feet thick. There was also a curtain wall surrounding the outer (eastern) bailey, traces of which were found in modern times in cutting through the bank to form the present carriage drive to The Lordship, a modern house on the north side of the churchyard. The remains of the castle are in its garden.⁴

Roger confirmed Binham to St. Alban's Abbey and his charter of confirmation was witnessed by his wife Agnes (*née* Fitz John) and their sons Peter, Robert, Geoffrey and John.⁵ He died in 1141-2.

Roger's son Peter followed his father in his allegiance to the empress. He was one of the witnesses to her second charter to Geoffrey de Mandeville in the early days of June 1142; and one of the sureties therein named for the empress's observance of it. He was relied on to assist in the intended revolt against the king in the eastern counties, of which this charter formed one of the preliminaries. Geoffrey de Mandeville was then at the height of his power and if supported by Aubrey de Vere, to whom the empress granted a charter at the same time and by Henry de Essex and Peter de Valoignes, he would have been virtual master of Essex and able to take Stephen in the rear while the empress advanced on London from the west. But the

¹ The first charter, by Stephen, about June-December 1140, created the Earldom of Essex and bestowed it on him. The second was by Matilda, when Stephen was a prisoner in Bristol Castle, in June 1141 at London, confirming the earldom, with other large grants. The third (now lost and known only by other evidence), was by the queen, very soon after Matilda had fled from London, and granted further powers and estates. The fourth was by the king at Canterbury at Christmas 1141, still more comprehensive. The fifth was a secret one by Matilda early in June 1142, while Geoffrey was still ostensibly siding with the king. For further details see J. H. Round's *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, 1892.

² Bayford and Essendon afterwards reverted to the crown.

³ J. H. Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. 286.

⁴ The pseudo-Norman gateway is a late nineteenth-century production.

⁵ *Monasticon Anglicanum*; quoted by Clutterbuck, *op. cit.*

king's recovery from an illness which was expected to be his last, and his energetic raid westward, turned the tables on the empress, and she fled from Oxford to her castle at Wallingford.¹

Peter de Valoignes again confirmed Binham to St. Alban's Abbey, and it is these successive charters of confirmation that furnish us with an authentic pedigree of the De Valoignes family. In Peter's charter² the witnesses are his mother Agnes, and his brothers Robert, Geoffrey, John, Roger and Phillip.¹ He died in 1158 without issue by his wife Gundreda de Warenne, and his eldest brother Robert became his heir.³

On the accession of Henry II in 1154 the De Valoignes had been deprived of the governorship of Hertford Castle, but they retained their barony. The castle was placed in the hands of the sheriff of Essex and Herts. The Red Book of the Exchequer⁴ includes a detailed list of holders of the barony under Robert de Valoignes in 1166.

(a) Temp. Henry I.

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|
| Ricardus de Calum (Calne) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7½ k.f. |
| Agnes de Monte Pincun | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 k.f. |
| Radulfus de Dalling | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 k.f. |
| Phillipus de Snaringes | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1½ k.f. |
| Galfridus de Snaringes | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Willelmus de Bosco | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ⅛ k.f. |
| Alan Fitz Radulfi (Alvredi) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Henricus frater Abbatis de Scto Eadmundo | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Matthæus de Franca Terra | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 k.f. |
| Robertus Fitz Jocelin | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Hunfridus de Beringham | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Ranulfus de Haia | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Ranulfus de Lactone | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1¼ k.f. |
| Ambrosius | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1⅛ k.f. |
| Wimerus le Fae | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Godefridus de Tiwinge | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Brien de Tiwinge | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Willelmus de Mondavilla | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Galfridus de Haia | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Willelmus de Boxa | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Robertus filius Radulfi | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Radulfus de Ouville | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Robertus de Insula | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Monachi Tefordiae | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Osbert de Taidone (Thaidene) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |

Total of the old feoffment temp. Hen. I, 30⅓ k.fs. And of these Galfridus de Valoigne holds 1⅛ of demesne lands of the same barony.

(b) The following fiefs are since that time "per" Peter de Valoigne, brother of the first born Robert, namely:

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Adam filius Alvredi | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Willelmus de Bosco | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Walterus de Neville | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |
| Galfridus de Valoigne | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ½ k.f. |
| Gundreda who was wife of Peter de Valoigne, for life | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 k.f. |

Total 4½ k.fs. and of these Galfridus de Valoigne holds 2½.

¹ J. H. Round, *op. cit.*

² *Monasticon Anglicanum*; quoted by Clutterbuck, *op. cit.* In the *D.N.B.* the genealogical information under Peter de Valoignes is inaccurate.

³ *Lib. Nig. Scacc.*, f. 246.

⁴ Vol. I, pp. 360-2.

Amongst other steps which Henry II took, in order to consolidate his position on the throne and to bring the lawless barons to submission, was the rebuilding of Hertford Castle, upon which work the Pipe Rolls of 1170 to 1174 record that £191 8s. 10½d. was expended, a sum equal at the present day to over £9,570. In 1177 the king ordered the demolition of Benington Castle. This was found to be an exceedingly tough job, and included amongst the Exchequer accounts in the Pipe Roll of 23 Henry II is a charge for a hundred picks which were required for the purpose.

Apparently Robert de Valoignes, nothing daunted at this destruction, which can have been only partial, restored the castle. He died in the year 1184, having had by his wife Hadewise or Hawise, who was dead by 1190, an only daughter Gunnora, who married, as her second husband,¹ Robert Fitz Walter, and brought to him the barony of Benington.

The unsettled state of England, owing not only to the turbulent barons but also to rebellion in the royal family, still persisted in the reign of Richard I. But that king was too engrossed with the Third Crusade to give much attention to home affairs, and left the government in the hands of the Justiciar William Longchamps. In the early months of 1191 the king's brother John landed in England to claim the crown, and there was a threat of invasion by Philip of France to help him. Amongst other measures of defence which the justiciar took was the thorough repair and garrisoning of Hertford Castle. He also garrisoned Benington Castle. The garrisons of the two castles cost, as the Pipe Rolls of 1193 record, for fifty days, for ten knights £25, for twenty men-at-arms with two horses £25; and for twenty footmen £8 6s. 8d. After the death of Robert de Valoignes in 1184 William Longchamps himself took charge of Hertford Castle; while the barony of Benington and its castle descended to Gunnora and her husband Robert Fitz Walter.

Much might be said here about Robert Fitz Walter; but for a full account of him the reader is referred to the *Dictionary of National Biography*. On the accession of John, he, considering that the governorship of Hertford Castle was hereditary, laid claim to it by right of his wife Gunnora as daughter of Robert de Valoignes, the heir of Peter de Valoignes. He not only produced a charter to prove his right but also tried to substantiate his claim by force and garrisoned the castle with his vassals. But the king was obdurate, and as Fitz Walter could not be persuaded to a voluntary submission the king seized the castle and dispossessed him. Then, having thus asserted his royal authority, he, in August 1202, appointed him its warden. Ten years later, John's misgovernment provoked the resentment of Fitz Walter with the result that he had to flee to France, and lost both his governorship and his estates. In 1213 the king destroyed Castle Baynard, Fitz Walter's London home, and demolished Benington Castle, which had evidently been restored after its demolition in 1177, by Robert de Valoignes, or more probably by Fitz Walter. When the king made his submission to the Pope, Fitz Walter returned to England and recovered his estates, but not the governorship. Then under his leadership as "Marshal of the Army of God and Holy Church," the barons forced John to sign the Magna Carta, in 1215. The king reappointed him as governor of Hertford Castle in June; but in August war broke out again and Fitz Walter went to France to offer the crown to Louis. Louis arrived in England on 21 May 1216, and entered London in triumph, but the death of John on 19 October put a different aspect on affairs, and the barons at once rallied to his son and successor, Henry III. The new king was only nine years old and the continued presence of the Frenchman was no longer desirable; but Louis was not ready to forgo the prize so nearly in his grasp. He besieged and took in turn Hertford and Berkhamstead Castles; whereupon Fitz Walter claimed from Louis the governorship of Hertford Castle as of ancient right; but Louis refused on the plea that Englishmen who had been traitors to their own king were not worthy to hold any office of importance.

Fitz Walter died in 1233 and Benington barony came to his daughter Christiana. She married firstly William de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, and secondly Reymond de Burgh, but died before 25 May 1233 without issue. In 1221 as widow of William de Mandeville she confirmed to Binham Priory five marks a year from Boketon Church, Suffolk, which Robert Fitz Walter her father and Gunnora her mother had given to it. Her sister Gundreda de Warenne was a witness to the charter.²

¹ Her first husband was Durand de Ostilli. See J. H. Round, in *The Ancestor*, XI, pp. 129-35, 1904.

² *Register of Binham Priory*. (B.M., Cott. Claudius D. XIII, f. 183; as quoted by Clutterbuck, *op. cit.*) Gundreda de Warenne can have been only a half-sister to Christiana. See J. A. C. Vincent's *Sir Alexander Balliol of Cavers*. (In Marshall's *Genealogist*, VI, 6, 1882.)

Christiana's heirs were her second cousins Lora, wife of Henry de Balliol, Chamberlain of Scotland (d. before 1272), Isabella, wife of David Comyn or Cumin and lady of Easter Kilbride, and Christiana, wife of Peter de Maule or Maugne. These three ladies were daughters and co-heirs of William de Valoignes of Panmure, Chamberlain of Scotland, who died in 1219, and was buried in Melrose Abbey, and granddaughters of Philip de Valoignes of Panmure, who was also Chamberlain of Scotland and who died in 1215, and was also buried at Melrose Abbey. This grandfather Philip was the Philip mentioned above as one of the sons of Roger de Valoignes (d. 1141-2) and brother of Peter, Robert, Geoffrey, Roger and John.

So on the death of Christiana de Mandeville the De Valoignes property was divided. In Essex, Little Parndon, and Welda or North Weald, apparently came to Lora de Balliol; of the Loughton property, Morant gives no later information after Peter de Valoignes's ownership in 1086; of Theydon Bois, he only gives the names of the holders Osbert de Thaiden and William de Bosco under Robert de Valoignes in 1166 and nothing later; Balingdon and Bineslea disappear altogether after 1086; and Sheering Hall¹ and Latton descended in the Fitz Walter family, presumably having been given by Gunnora and Robert Fitz Walter to his son and Christiana's half-brother Walter Fitz Walter (d. 1248 and buried at Dunmow Priory).

Leyton is said to have been previously given by Gunnora to Haliwell Nunnery, Middlesex; but the family must have retained some property there which came to Christiana de Maule, for in 1257 land in Leyton was held of Peter de Mamie (*sic*) and Christiana his wife by doing suit to their court at Higham.² On this same evidence the manor of Higham was shared by the three sisters, the portions of Lora and Isabella becoming known as Higham Balliol and Higham Comyn respectively. Christiana's portion was nameless; but it has been suggested that it may be identified with Higham Toni.³

In Herts, Lora de Balliol inherited Benington with the members of the barony, Graveley (Chisfield manor), Box in Walkern (with its sub-members Wollenwich in Hoddesdon, Layston, and Stonebury in Little Hormead), Crowborough and Woodhall manors in Watton, and Libury in Little Munden. Isabella Comyn received Sacombe; Christiana de Maule shared Hertingfordbury manor with her sisters and it was eventually acquired by her alone.⁴ The Ashwell, Hinxworth, Almshoe in Hatfield,⁵ and Radwell estates afterwards descended in the Fitz Walter family, having perhaps been alienated to Walter Fitz Walter as suggested above. Of the Datchworth, Digswell and Chells (Stevenage) property there is no trace after 1086.

¹ Christiana de Maule evidently had some interest in Sheering Hall manor for Morant records that in 1278 she founded a free chapel of St. Nicholas about a quarter of a mile from Sheering Church, and that she held Sheering manor of the king in chief.

² *W.A.S. Monograph* 24, p. 10. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴ Marshall's *Genealogist*, VI, 5; and *V.C.H. Herts*, III, 463. ⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 106.

THE BALLIOL FAMILY

ON the death of Christiana, widow firstly of William de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, and secondly of Reymond de Burgh, without issue, before 25 May 1233, her second cousin Lora had inherited Benington, Herts, a third of Higham manor in Walthamstow and other manors, and so brought them to her husband, Henry de Balliol.

Henry de Balliol was Chamberlain of Scotland from 1223 to 1229, and again from 1241 to 1246. He died before 1272 and was buried at Melrose Abbey. Lora also was dead by 1272. They had two sons, Guy and Alexander. Guy took part in the battle of Evesham on 4 August 1265, being standard bearer to Simon de Montfort. When Simon was killed he refused to quit the field and died with his master.¹ After the battle some of Simon's followers continued to hold out, and when finally they submitted they were treated leniently by the king, their lands which had been forfeit to the crown being restored to them. William Comyn, Guy's cousin, evidently participated in the battle on the same side as Guy. At the *Inquisitio post mortem* of his mother Isabella on 17 April 1253, he had been found to be her heir in her manors, including Higham Comyn, and aged 16 or 17 years,² and on reaching his majority in 1257 or 1258 he would in due course obtain livery of his manors; but in 1265 those manors were taken into the king's hands,³ and he does not appear as holding Higham Comyn until 1274.⁴

So all the Balliol manors came to Guy's brother Alexander, for he died without issue. Alexander was lord of Cavers in Teviotdale⁵ and Chamberlain of Scotland from 1287 to 1294. By his marriage with Isabella de Chilham, widow of David de Strathbogie, Earl of Athol, he became connected with Kent. She died in 1292. Her tomb is in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral. The Cartulary of Binham Priory, which is in the British Museum, contains an important charter by him dated 1272, by which he gave to his aunt Christiana de Maule all his lands, etc., in Dersingham, Norfolk, and she in return gave him all hers in Higham, Walthamstow.⁶ It reads:

Sciunt presentes et futuri quod Ego Alex. de Baliolo filius Henr. de Balliol', concessi dedi et hac presenti carta mea confirmavi Domine Cristiane de Maunlea Amite mee omnes terras et tenementa cum suis pertinenciis sine vllo retenemento que m' acciderunt in parte mea Jure hereditario post mortem Domine Lore Matris mee et Gydonis fratris mei in villa de Dersingham in Comitatu Northf[olcie] Habend. et tenend. eidem domine Cristiane et heredibus suis et suis assignatis omnes terras et tenementa predicta cum suis pertinenciis sine vllo retenemento de Capitalibus dominis feodi illius libere quiete integre bene in pace Jure hereditario in perpetuum Reddendo inde annuatim eisdem Capitalibus dominis feodi illius servicia inde debita et consueta. Et nichilominus ego predictus Alex. et heredes mei warantizabimus acquietabimus et defendemus omnes predictas terras et omnia predicta tenementa cum omnibus suis pertinenciis contra omnes gentes xp'ianos et Judeos in perpetuum. Et pro predictis concessione donacione Carte mee confirmacione warantizacione acquietacione et defensione dedit m' predicta domina Cristiana in excambium omnes terras et tenementa sua cum omnibus pertinenciis sine vllo retenemento que habuit in Heyham in parochia de Welcomestowe in Estsex'. In cujus Rei testimonium huic Carte sigillum meum apposui. Hijs testibus; D'no Walt'o de Estsex' tunc vic. Estsex', D'no

¹ Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland*, I, 195. The manor of Benington was then taken into the king's hands. (*Cal. Inq. Misc.*, I, 217.)

² *Inq. 37 Hen. III*, No. 45. ³ *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, I, 201, etc. ⁴ *W.A.S. Monograph 24*, p. 10.

⁵ It has often been asserted that Alexander was brother of John Balliol, King of Scotland. But see *The Genealogist*, VI, 1-7, 1882; and *D.N.B.*

⁶ B.M., Cott. Claudius D. XIII, fol. 151.

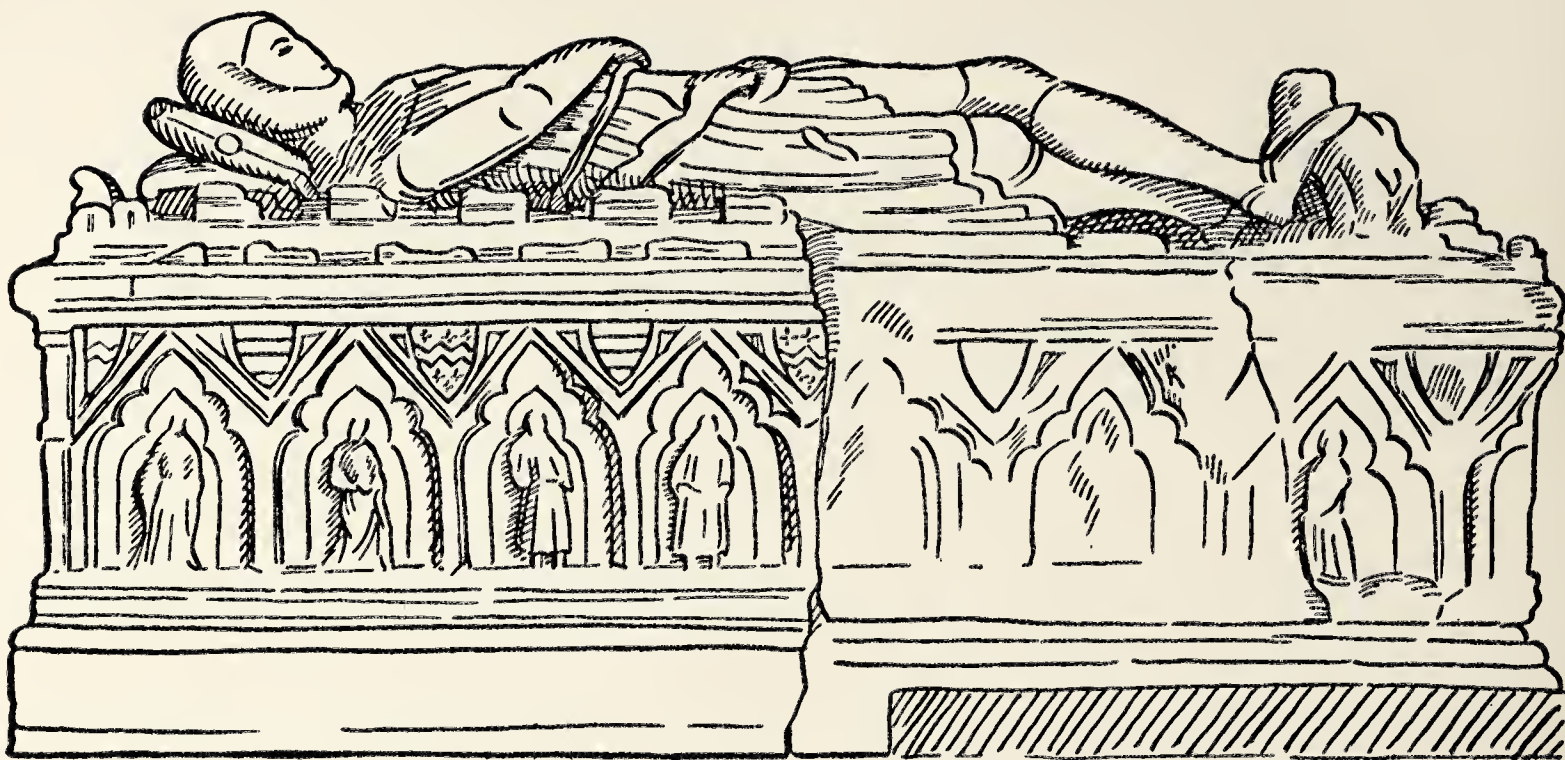
Will'o de Wilewe, D'no Henrico de Balliol', D'no Henrico persona de Kemtone, Will'o de Wales, D'no Roberto persona de Hertfortingeber', D'no Johanne de Redeswelle, Joh'e de Gelham, Galfr' de Say, Petro filio Joh'is, Petro de Wendene, et alijs. Dat. apud Ware vj^o die Aprilis Anno Regni Regis Henrici filij Regis Joh'is L^o sexto. (1272.)

This charter is interesting also locally for Herts as it was executed at Ware, and amongst the witnesses were several Herts clerics: William (perhaps parson) of Wilewe (Welwyn), Henry parson of Kemtone (perhaps Kimpton), John (perhaps parson) of Redeswelle (Radwell), and Robert parson of Hertingfordbury. Henry de Balliol was rector of Benington and died in 1191, his successor being appointed by Alexander de Balliol. Some of the others were hitherto unknown.

After his wife's death in 1292 Alexander de Balliol, probably preferring to make Scotland his chief place of residence, in 1303 disposed of Benington and its members to John de Benstede, and two years later parted with Higham Balliol to the same gentleman. Thus ended the ownership of these manors by the Balliol family.¹ In 1278 he had claimed liberties in his manors of Watton (namely Woodhall) and Crowborough, Herts.²

¹ Morant (II, 495) states that Alexander sold Little Parndon to John de Benstede in 1284.

² *V.C.H. Herts*, III, 161, 162.



SKETCH OF THE TOMB OF SIR JOHN DE BENSTEDE, IN BENINGTON CHURCH, HERTS.

THE BENSTEDE FAMILY

THE Benstede family derived its name from Binsted near Alton in Hampshire, known in the eleventh century as Benstede, where their chief manor lay. They also had, as the *Inquisitio post mortem* of John de Benstede in 1323¹ shows, considerable property in Herts, Essex, Cambs, Devon, Middlesex and Wilts.

The earliest recorded Benstede in Herts was John de Benstede, who was rector of Little Berkhamstead, being presented to that living by its patrons the Prior and Convent of Lewes in Sussex, in 1297. He resigned the living in 1310. Apparently he had married Beatrice, daughter of Robert and Beatrice de Gravele of Graveley, Herts, and acquired Benington manor from Alexander de Balliol in 1303²; and Higham Balliol two years later.

The conditions of the Higham Balliol sale were that Robert and Beatrice should hold the manor for life and that it should then revert to John de Benstede and his heirs.³ The Feet of Fines, made in Hilary term, 1305,⁴ reads:

John de Benstede clerk, plaintiff by Roger de Preslond. Alexander de Balliolo of Caures, deforciant, by John de . . . te. One messuage and one carucate of land in Hiegham, Essex, and

¹ See p. 19, *et seq.*

² In 1305 the king granted John de Benstede a licence to hold a yearly fair on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, and a market every Wednesday in Benington manor (Cart. 33 Edw. I, no. 75).

³ See the *Inq. p.m.* of Beatrice de Gravele, p. 26, *et seq.*

⁴ *Feet of Fines, Essex*, II, 104.

one mill in Watton, Herts, which Robert de Graveleye and Beatrix his wife hold for life. Plea of covenant. Plaintiff and his heirs to hold the reversion of the King and his heirs. Consideration, 100 marks of silver. This agreement was made in the presence of Robert and Beatrix, and they did fealty.

Robert de Graveleye died about the year 1311. A slab with a worn inscription in Lombardic characters marks his resting place in the north chapel of Watton Church, Herts. Crowborough manor, Watton, had been sub-infeudated from Benington manor for some years, when its holder, Cristine de Rivers, conveyed it in 1270 to Robert de Graveleye. His widow Beatrice disposed of it to the Bardolf family in 1329. Beatrice married secondly John de Blounville. She died in 1336-7; the record of her *Inquisitio post mortem* made on 30 March, 11 Edw. III, 1336-7,¹ and the *Inquisitio de certiorari* two years later on 24 May, 13 Edw. III, 1339,² read:

Writ, 6 March, 11 Edw. III (1336-7.)

ESSEX. *Inq.* 30 March 11 Edw. III.

Welcomstowe. A messuage, land and rent (extent given), held for her life by the said Beatrice, late the wife of John de Blounville, by the demise of Alexander de Balyolf, with reversion to the said Alexander and his heirs; and after her death, they reverted to John de Benstede and his heirs. Edmund son and heir of the said John de Benstede, afterwards granted that the said tenements, by virtue of the grant and attornment made to him in this behalf, should, after the death of the said Beatrice, remain to Robert de Morle, William de Playford and their heirs; and the said Robert and William afterwards granted that the said tenements should, after the death of the said Beatrice, remain to Maud late the wife of the said Edmund, for her life, and after her death to John, son of the said Edmund, and his heirs for ever.³ The said John is 5 years of age and more. The said tenements are held of the king in chief, as of the barony of Valoins, for a twelfth part of a knight's fee.

Heir of the said Beatrice unknown.

Memorandum from the excheator that, by virtue of the king's mandate of 31 March, 11 Edw. III, he went to Hechen⁴ and took fealty of the said Maud, whose homage the king had respited until the feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist next.

Writ of certiorari 24 May, 13 Edw. III. (1339.) Whereas the king has been given to understand that the said Beatrice held for life, of the inheritance of John son of Edmund de Benstede, a minor and in the King's wardship, a messuage and a carucate of land in Heygham, Essex, the wardship whereof ought to pertain to the king by reason of the minority of the said heir; and that certain persons, since the death of the said Beatrice, have entered upon the same, and occupied them, by receiving to their own use the issues and profits, in contempt of the king, and manifest danger or disherison of the said heir; the king desires to be certified what estate the said Beatrice had in the same, etc.

ESSEX. *Inq.* made at Waltham Holy Cross on Tuesday, the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, 13 Edw. III.

Heygham.⁵ The said Beatrice, who died two years and a half ago, held a messuage and a carucate of land, for her life, of the demise of Alexander de Balliolo of Caures, who demised them to Robert de Graveleye and the said Beatrice then his wife, to hold for their lives, with remainder to John de Benstede and his heirs, by fine levied in the court of king Edward I; by virtue whereof the reversion of those tenements pertains to John, son and heir of Edmund de Benstede sone of the abovesaid John, a minor and in the king's

¹ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Quarto), VIII, 62. ² *Ibid.*, p. 172.

³ This grant of Higham Benstede manor, to Robert de Morlee and William Playford, by Edmund, although called an alienation in his *Inq. p.m.*, 1334-5 (see p. 25), was evidently only by way of a settlement on Matilda, Edmund's wife, and John their son, to materialise after the death of Beatrice de Graveleye's death, Morlee and Playford being trustees.

⁴ Hitchin, Herts. ⁵ See also *Cal. Fine Rolls*, V, 134.

wardship; and thus the wardship of the same pertains to the king, by reason of the minority of the said heir, for the said tenements are held of the king in chief, as of the crown, by service of a sixth part of a knight's fee.

Henry de Cheyny, citizen of London, has occupied those tenements from the time of the death of the said Beatrice, and received the issues, as the jurors understand.

In 1306-7 John de Benstede (whether the parson or his son is not stated, but probably the former) acquired from Richard, son of William de Betuyne, further property in Higham known as Waterhall.¹ The Feet of Fines, executed in Trinity term, 35 Edw. I, 1306-7,² reads:

John de Benstede plaintiff. Richard son of William de Betuyne of London, imp. One messuage, 180 acres of land, 8 acres of meadow, 8 acres of pasture, 4 acres of wood, and 7s. 5d. of rent in Hegham, Welcomestowe, Chingeford, and Sywardeston, Plea of warranty of charter. Plaintiff and his heirs to hold of the chief lords. Consideration £100 sterling.

John de Benstede saw much royal service.³ From 22 August 1297 to 14 March 1398 he accompanied Edward I to Flanders, having charge of the great seal.⁴ In 1302 the king granted him markets and a fair at Ermington, Devon, and, the following year, at Benington likewise.⁵ In the parliament of 1305 he was appointed one of twenty-one members to consider the matter of the stability of Scotland, and was also made Chancellor of the Exchequer, a post which he held for two years.⁶ In 1307 the king granted him permission to fortify his house called Rosemont at Eye near Westminster with walls of lime and stone. In 1308 he was sent to France to arrange the interview at Pontoise between Edward II and King Philip of France, which preceded Edward's marriage with Philip's daughter Isabella; and was also made Keeper of the King's Wardrobe.⁷ From 1307 to 1320 he was a justice of the Common Pleas;⁸ and from 1311 until 1321 was regularly summoned to parliament as a justice. In 1311 he was designated Sir John Benstede knight,⁹ and the same year he received leave of absence to go to Rome on the king's business.¹⁰ In 1314 he was sent to Northumberland to concert measures with Robert Bruce to deal with incursions by the Scots.¹¹ In 1315 he was sent abroad with Thomas de Cantebrugge to carry the king's instructions to Almaric de Craon, seneschal of Gascony, Amadeus, lord of Lebrét, and other officials in Gascony and Aquitaine.¹² In 1316 he started for the Papal court on matters concerning Scotland, but was recalled from Dover. In 1317 he was appointed one of two commissioners of Array in Herts;¹³ and the next year he was one of the envoys sent to treat for peace with Robert Bruce, King of Scotland.¹⁴ In 1319 he was sent to Rome with the Bishop of Hereford and two others to urge on the Pope the canonisation of Thomas de Cantelupe, Bishop of Hereford.¹⁵

John de Benstede married firstly Isabella, of whom nothing further appears to be known. His second wife was Petronilla or Parnel, daughter of Henry Grapynel and widow of John Fitz John Fitz Simon, whom he married before 1297.¹⁶ At the *Inquisitio post mortem* of her father, Henry Grapynel, in 1297 it was found that he was seised of Great Stambridge manor and lands in Little Wakering, Latchingdon, and

¹ *W.A.S. Monograph* 24, p. 11. ² *Feet of Fines, Essex*, II, 115. See also *W.A.S. Monograph* 24, p. 11.

³ See his biography in *D.N.B.*

⁴ The great seal always accompanied the king. Whenever he went abroad the king's seal was used in England instead. In this case, on his return on 14 March 1398, the great seal was handed back to the chancellor, John de Langton, and the king's seal returned to the treasury. (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, I, 390.)

⁵ In 1302 John de Benstede the king's clerk "who stays continually by his side" was rector of Monkton, Devon. (*Cal. Close Rolls, 1295-1302*, p. 602.) In 1305 he is designated *Magister John de Benstede scaccarii nostri cancellarium Sarisbiriensis* (Rymer's *Fædera*, I, 974).

⁶ In 1305 he was also a canon of Salisbury Cathedral. (*Ibid.*, 1302-7, p. 351.)

⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, II, 14.

⁸ *Cal. Close Rolls, 1307-13*, p. 231; 1317-21, p. 508.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1307-13, p. 340.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 321. Rymer's *Fædera*, II, 128. (In one document here he is called in error Nicholas de Benstede.)

¹¹ *Ibid.*, II, 255.

¹² *Cal. Close Rolls, 1313-18*, pp. 103, 303, 328. Rymer's *Fædera*, II, 273.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1317-21, p. 96.

¹⁴ Rymer's *Fædera*, II, 358.

¹⁵ *Cal. Close Rolls, 1317-21*, p. 317. Rymer's *Fædera*, II, 383, 385.

¹⁶ Clutterbuck calls them Hugh de Grapenel and Adam Fitz John. John Fitz John's father, Sir John Fitz Simon, Kt., was M.P. for Herts in 1290 and 1295.

Bardfield, all in Essex.¹ His heirs were his four daughters, Petronilla, aged 22, and married to John Fitz John; Margery, aged 20, and unmarried;² Joan, aged 16, and married to Adam Fitz John (John's brother), and Margaret, aged 13, and unmarried.³

The *Inquisitio post mortem* of Petronilla's first husband, John Fitz John Fitz Simon, who died in 1303, found that he held Great Stambridge with Petronilla as of her inheritance and she could make whomsoever she wished her heir. In Herts he held 160 acres of land and 13s. 4d. of rent in Mendlisdene (Minsden), Hiche (Hitchin) manor, Almshoe manor, Langeley *juxta* Almshoe, Bengoe, Thebrigge, Hatfield manor, and 16s. of rent in Titeberst.

Six years later, in 1309, the *Inquisitio post mortem* of Peter Burre found that he was enfeoffed of 80 acres of arable land in Great Stambridge by Petronilla Grapinel.

As another record of his Inquisition states, in Herts John Fitz John Fitz Simon had the manors of Symondshyde in Hatfield, Almshoe in Ippollitts, and Thebridgehyde in Sandridge and also the advowsons of Radwell and Graveley churches. He also had in Bengoe, Herts, one tenement held of John Engayne and another held of the Prior of Bermondsey; a messuage worth 2s., and 200 acres of land worth 3d. an acre, 12 acres of pasture worth 12d. an acre, 40 acres of meadow worth 2s. an acre, rents of assize of freemen 40s. *per annum*, and labour in autumn of ten customary tenants worth 10s. *per annum*. Of these Almshoe manor and the advowson of Radwell came to Petronilla for life.⁴

In 1316 John de Benstede and Petronilla exercised the patronage of Radwell Church; and Petronilla alone as a widow, in 1333 and 1334.⁵

In 1315-16 John de Benstede acquired from Simon Heron the reversion of a messuage, 240 acres of arable land, rent in money, and rent of three clove gilliflowers, one goose, two fowls and five sheep, and rights of pasture in Hatfield.⁶ This probably coincided with the reputed manor of Herons in Cromerhyde. It does not appear in his *Inq. p.m.*, 1323.⁷ In 1316 he acquired property in Harpesfield manor in St. Peter's parish, St. Albans, Herts. This consisted of the Hall only, while the lands continued in the Harpesfield family. In 1317-18 he also purchased from John de Queye or Coye the manor of Chewells in Hatfield, Herts, which consisted of a messuage, 70 acres of land and 3 acres of wood. The purchase of Benington from Alexander de Balliol in 1303 had included all its members in Essex and Herts; the latter included Chisfield in Graveley, Stonebury with its Layston half hide in Little Hornead, Watton-at-Stone (the overlordship of Crowborough and Woodhall manors), and tenements in Boxe and Hoddesdon, and also the advowson of Benington Church.

John de Benstede died in 1323⁸ and Inquisitions as to his property were held in various counties. Their findings are too valuable to be curtailed, hence no excuse is necessary for giving the details in full here.⁹

Writ, 20 December, 17 Edw. II.

DEVON. *Inq.* Monday after the Purification, 17 Edw. II.

Ermyngton. The manor (extent given), including the pasture of "La Southpark," and the wood of Yernecnolle, held of Hugh de Courtney of the honour of Plympton, by service of $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{8}$ knight's fee; and the advowson of a moiety of the church.

¹ *Inq. p.m. Edw. I*, No. 453. Another list of his property at this Inquisition reads, Wawkring Parva, Bordefeld terr' Stanebrigge Magna Maner', Lachindon terr', etc. (*Cal. Inq. p.m. (Folio)*, I, 145.)

² Margery married William Inge; and an Inquisition held in 1321-2 (15 Edw. II, no. 42) found that they held in Lachindon, Essex, 60 acres of land, 2 acres of meadow, 3 acres of pasture, 24 acres of marsh, 1 messuage and 60 acres of land to it. In Wheathamsted, Herts, and Redbourn, Herts, they had 5 messuages, 2 carucates and 3 virgates of land, containing 280 acres, 4 acres of meadow, 60 acres of wood, and 40s. rent. (*Cal. Inq. p.m. (Folio)*, I, 299.)

³ Margaret married Nicholas de Haveringe, and died a widow 22 November 1334. She held certain tenements in Offley, Herts, of the heir of John de Seint Leger, and of others; and a rent of £4 a year, parcel of the manor of Tyle Hall, in Latchingdon, Essex, etc. (*Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, 5S, IX, 54.)

⁴ *Cal. Inq. p.m. (Quarto)*, V, 112.

⁵ Cussans; *Hertford Hundred*, p. 35.

⁶ *Feet of Fines, Herts*, 9 Edw. II, no. 229. (*V.C.H. Herts*, III, 103.)

⁷ In Petronilla's *Inq. p.m.*, 1342, and some later ones it appears to be included in Chewells.

⁸ On 20 December, 1323, the escheators were ordered to take his lands into the king's hands. (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, III, 250, 254.)

⁹ *Cal. Inq. p.m. (Quarto)*, VI, 284-7.

Writ, 20 December, 17 Edw. II.

ESSEX. *Inq.* Tuesday after St. Hilary, 17 Edw. II.

Wolcomestowe.¹ A messuage, 100a. arable, 8a. meadow, 8a. pasture, and 2½d. yearly rent, held of the abbot of Great Wautham by service of 4s. yearly.

HERTFORD. *Inq.* 4 January, 17 Edw. II.

Benigton. The manor (full extent given), including meadow in Aldewelle, held of the king in chief by service of a third part of 2 knights' fees; and 5¼ knights' fees pertaining to the manor, viz.;

(ESSEX). Little Parndon. The manor held by Humphrey de Waldon by service of 1¼ knight's fee,

(CAMBRIDGE.) Fulbourne and Teverisham. A tenement held by William la Zouche, lord of Asshebi, by service of ½ k.f.

HERTFORD. Watton. The manor held by Philip de Pelidot by service of 1½ k.f.²

Chenisfeld. The manor held by John de Blounville by service of ½ k.f.³

Boxen. The manor held between them by Richard son of Alexander de Boxen, John de Langton, John de Brokisbourne, and Ralph de Foxton, by service of 1 k.f.⁴

Hormead. A tenement held by Walter de Nevill by service of ½ k.f.⁵

Benyngton. The advowson of the church.

Arpissfeld⁶ in St. Albans. Certain tenements held jointly by the said John and Petronilla his wife, who survives, by the enfeoffment of Joan late the wife of John de la Mare, John Waleys and Elizabeth his wife, John de Wrotting and Agnes his wife, and John le Yunge and Joan his wife, heirs of John de Arpissfeld, of the abbot of St. Albans by service of 15s. yearly.

Chewell in Bishop's Hatfield. A messuage, 70a. land, and 3a. wood, held jointly by the said John and Petronilla, to themselves and the heirs of the said John, by the enfeoffment of John de Queye, of the bishop of Ely, by service of 2s. yearly.

Writ, 20 December, 17 Edw. II.

WILTS. *Inq.* 23 January, 17 Edw. II.

Wyntreslewe manor. £20 yearly rent held of John de Cromwelle, in whose hand is the manor, without any service.⁷

¹ The Balliol and Waterhall manors.

² Woodhall manor. Philip de Peletot acquired it by marriage with Flora, daughter of Oliver d'Aubigny. Their son Philip, patron of Watton Church from 1329 until his death in 1361, is commemorated by a large much-restored brass in the north chapel there.

³ Chisfield in Graveley. John de Blounville was the second husband of Beatrice de Benstede, *née* Graveley.

⁴ Domesday Book specifies property of Peter de Valoignes in Boxe and Wollenwich, the latter being held, before the Conquest, by Alwin and Godwin, vassals of Almaric (Almar) of Benington. From the size (1 hide) and the names of the holders (recorded in this Inquisition as Boxen), who were all Hoddesdon men, and holding ¼ hide each, it is evident that the property was Wollenwich, the Woolans Brook of to-day, between Hoddesdon and Haileybury, and then a member of Boxe manor. Boxe manor lay to the north-west of Benington, near Walkern. (J. A. Tregelles, *History of Hoddesdon*, 1908, p. 58, etc.) The *Inq. p.m.* of Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, 1306-7, found that John de Benstede held of him in Boxe, ½ k.f., owing suit at the Earl's court of Weston. (*Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Quarto) II, 300.)

⁵ Stonebury manor.

⁶ John de Benstede left Harpesfield to his Petronilla in dower, with reversion to their grandson John. (*V.C.H. Herts*, II, 416.)

⁷ After the *Inq. p.m.* of Edmund, Earl of March (o.s.p., before 26 September 1300), held at Exeter on 22 November 1300, Margaret, his widow, claimed one-third of £20 rent as her dower in the manor against John de Benstede, who said that the Earl gave the £20 to him and his heirs. On 23 October 1303 it was found that the Earl had given it to him as rent seck. (*Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Quarto), III, pp. 484, 486.)

SOUTHAMPTON. *Inq.* made at Aultone, 26 January, 17 Edw. II.

Alsieholte forest. 20a. of pourpresture¹ held of the king, in chief by service of 6s. 8d.

Benestede by Aultone. A messuage, 29a. arable, 2a. meadow, and 15s. 11d. rent, held of Edmund Earl of Kent, by service of 21s.: a messuage, 20a. land, 6a. pasture, 2a. meadow, and 5s. rent, held of Robert de Popham by service of 8s. 3½d.; a messuage, 11a. arable, and 1a. meadow, held of Edmund Thurstan by service of 3s. 10d. yearly; 3a. arable and 1a. meadow, held by Peter de Heghes by service of 3s.; and 2a. meadow held of Thomas atte Smyethe by service of 8d. yearly.

Writ, 10 January, 17 Edw. II.

MIDDLESEX. *Inq.* taken at Tothulle² on Thursday after St. Valentine, 17 Edw. II.

Westminster. A messuage,³ 12a. land, 1a. meadow, and 4a. pasture, held of the abbot of Westminster by service of 10s. yearly, and suit at the abbot's court at Westminster; and 2a. land held of Walter Fraunceys⁴ without any service.

Eye. 43a. land and 1a. meadow, held by the king, as of the manor of "la Nayte" and Eyghebury, by service of 4s. yearly and suit at the court of Eyghebury.⁵

All these Inquisitions found that John's heir was his son Edmund, whose age is given variously as 11 to 13 years.

Further information being desirable writs of *certiorari* were issued, and replies were received.

Writ of certiorari de foedis, etc., 10 March, 17 Edw. II. (1323-4.)

HERTFORD. *Inq.* 5 February, 18 Edw. II. (1323-4.)

Little Hormead. The manor is held by Walter de Nevill by service of ½ k.f.⁶

Chinesfeld. The manor held by John de Blunvill by service of 1 k.f.

Watton. The manor held by Philip de Peletoft by service of 1½ k.f.

Boxen and Hodesdon. Certain tenements held by Alexander le Chaumberleyn⁷ by service of ¼ k.f.; and certain tenements held by John de Brokesbourn, John de Langton, and Ralph de Foxton and Margery his wife, as of her inheritance, by service of ¾ k.f.

ESSEX. Welde. The manor held by Hugh le Despenser by service of 5 k.fs.⁸

Little Perndon. The manor held by Humphrey de Waleden by service of 1½ k.f.⁹

¹ Pourpresture = encroachments. ² The place name survives to-day as Tothill Fields.

³ This was his house called Rosemount, at Eye, near Westminster, which the king, in 1307, had given him leave to fortify with walls of lime and stone. (*D.N.B.*)

⁴ He was probably related to Simon Fraunceys, lord of Low Hall manor, Walthamstow. (*W.A.S. Monograph* 24, p. 4.)

⁵ The name survives to-day as Ebury Street, Westminster. ⁶ Stonebury.

⁷ Called in the *Inq. p.m.* Alexander de Boxen. See above.

⁸ Omitted from the *Inq. p.m.* The manor was that of North Weald Basset, so called from the holders, the Basset family. Aliva, or Alina (b. 1241), daughter and heir by his first wife, Helewise, of Philip Basset (d. 1271), was holding the manor at the time of her death in 1280 (*Inq. p.m.* 9 Edw. I) some time of the Castle of Benington by service of five knights' fees (Morant: *Essex*, I, 149). Aliva married firstly Roger Bigot and secondly Hugh le Despenser. In 1323 when John de Benestede died, Aliva's son Hugh le Despenser, Earl of Winchester, was holding it of him.

⁹ John de la Mare held Little Parndon and its advowson of the manor of Benington by service of one and half knights' fees before 1316 and had demised it on the death of himself and his wife to Humphrey de Walden. After the death of Humphrey and his wife Joan it was to revert to John de Benstede and Petronilla. The Feet of Fines relating to this agreement, executed in Easter term, 10 Edw. II, 1316-17, reads: "John de Benstede and Petronilla his wife plaintiffs by William de Pakelesham in her place. John de la Mare of Perndon, deforciant. The manor of Little Perndon and the advowson of the church of the manor which Humphrey de Walden holds for life of the demise of John de la Mare and Joan his wife. Plaintiff and the heirs of John to hold the reversion after the death of Humphrey and Joan of the chief lords. Consideration 100 marks of silver. This agreement was made in the presence of Humphrey and he did fealty." (*Feet of Fines, Essex*, II, 174.)

CAMBRIDGE. Fulbourn and Theveresham. Certain tenements held by John de Buttetourte by service of $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f.¹

HERTFORD. Benyngton. The advowson of the church.

DEVON.² *Inq.* 29 Oct., 18 Edw. II. (1324.)

Ridmor. $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. held by Roger le Jew.

Wokkenebiri, Langeston and Marlewille. $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. by John de Ferar[iis].

Choveleston and Forde. 1 k.f. held by Thomas de Scobhull.

Brittricheston. 1 k.f. held by Thomas de Brittricheston.

Stodbiri. $\frac{1}{8}$ k.f. held by the bishop of Exeter.

Bakkemor and Houelond. Three parts of a k.f. held by Margery de Niwenham.

Bikkote and Thorne. $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. held by Walter de Bikkote.

Turislo. 1 k.f. held by Walter de Kary.

More Malherbe and Wydyamor. $1\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. held by the prior of the Hospital of St. John.

Tavy Sancte Marie. $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. held by John Daumale.

Boklond Cammel and Wydyamore. $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. held by Walter Cammel.

Blachsworthi. 1 k.f. held by Richard de Hiwish and John de Asshel[e].

Hiwish. $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. held by Nicholas de Teukesbiri.

Wycroft. $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. held by Joan, late wife of Richard de Teyngmuth.

Ermynnton. The advowson of a moiety of the church.

Following the *Inquisitio post mortem* a claim was put in regarding Eye.

Writ of certiorari on the petition of Margery, late the wife of John atte Hyde, for her dower of certain lands, etc., in Eye, of which the said John atte Hyde enfeoffed John de Benstede, after whose death they were taken into the king's hand, 20 May, 17 Edw. II. (1323.)

MIDDLESEX. *Inq.* Wednesday after the quinzaine of St. Michael, 18 Edw. II. (1324.)

Eye. A toft, 45*a.* land, and 3*a.* meadow, held of the king as of the manor of "la Neyte" by service of 4*s.* yearly at the said manor, and suit at the king's court of Eyebury, were held by the said John atte Hyde when he married Margery his wife, and for twelve years after until he enfeoffed John de Benstede thereof, who held them for twelve years and more, after whose death they were seised into the king's hands by reason of the minority of his heir. And the said Margery has not been dowered otherwise in respect thereof, nor has quitclaimed her right, and no other lands have descended to the heirs of the said John atte Hyde, from which they could satisfy her dower. The guardian of the lands, etc., has nothing otherwise to say.

Another claim was made, on Benington manor, by Joan de Balsham.

Writ of certiorari on the complaint of Joan de Balsham that since the lands, etc., of John de Benstede were taken into the king's hand, the escheator had not paid her 10 marks yearly which the said John granted her for life, for a quitclaim of all actions, etc., and which she received from the manor of Benyngton, Herts, 24 May, 17 Edw. II. (1323.)

HERTFORD. *Inq.* 20 June, 17 Edw. II. (1323.)

John de Benstede granted the said Joan 10 marks yearly for life and charged all his lands, etc., therewith, and she was accustomed to receive the same.³

¹ In 1302-3, John de Benstede and William de St. Ivo were holding $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. in Ditton Valoyns, of Edmund de Pakenham, and paid 40*s.* (*Feudal Aids*, I, 142.)

² Omitted from the *Inq. p.m.*

³ See also *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), IV, 434. Petronilla, on 2 June 1324, was ordered to continue this payment. (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 1323-7, p. 116.)



Photo

Latchmore, Hitchin

CANOPIED ALTAR TOMB OF SIR EDWARD BENSTEDE, d. 1432, AND HIS WIFE JOAN, NÉE THORNBURY, d. 1448, BENINGTON CHURCH, HERTS.



Photo

Latchmore, Hitchin

THE EFFIGIES OF SIR EDWARD BENSTEDE, d. 1432, AND HIS WIFE JOAN, NÉE THORNBURY, d. 1448, BENINGTON CHURCH, HERTS.

It is obvious that this and subsequent Inquisitions are not complete as regards the whole property of the Benstede family and even any one piece of it varies considerably in description from time to time. From the Feudal Aids of the period may be gathered details which are wanting in this *Inquisitio post mortem* of John de Benstede, but these record only a small fraction of his property. In that of 1302-3, levied for the marriage of the king's daughter, a $\frac{1}{2}$ knight's fee assessed at xxs. was held by John de Benstede and William de St. Ivo, of Edmund de Pakenham in Ditton Valoyns.¹ At Ermyngton, Devon, at the same date, John de Benstede held $\frac{1}{3}$ k.f.² In the Aid of 1316, which was for the supply of a man at arms from each *vill*, he is designated as lord of Ermyngton hundred.³

Besides his other property in Essex, John de Benstede appears to have had some connection with Great and Little Baddow. On 26 December 1302, Hugh at Ford of Little Badwe acknowledged that he owed John de Benstede, clerk, the sum of £100.⁴ Sixteen years later a fine was levied, which reads:

Michaelmas term, 12 Edw. II, 1318-19. John de Benstede, plaintiff. John Wayn of Great Badewe and Cristiana his wife, deforciant. One messuage, 92 acres of land, 10 acres of meadow, 10 acres of pasture and 6s. 8d. rent in Great Badewe, Sandon, and West Hanyngfeld. John Wayn acknowledged the tenements to be the right of the plaintiff as those which the plaintiff has of his gift, and for this the plaintiff granted them to the deforciant to hold for their lives of the chief lords with remainder to John son of John Wayn and his heirs.⁵

After his death, on 22 May 1324, as his son and heir Edmund was under age, his Westminster house Rosamund, consisting of a messuage, 14 acres of land, 1 acre of meadow, and 4 acres of pasture, was put by the king under the custody of Master Robert de Ayleston, clerk, and he was instructed to continue to the abbot of Westminster the payment of 10s. a year, which Benstede had paid for it.⁶ Edward III, on his accession, committed it, on 22 February 1327, to H. (*sic.*), Bishop of Hereford, the treasurer.⁷

On 10 March 1324 the escheator was ordered to deliver to Petronilla to hold in dower, Benington manor, extended to £41 6s. 8d., which the king had assigned her of her late husband's lands.⁸

Further, on 18 June 1325, he was ordered to deliver to her other lands which the king had assigned her in dower. They consisted of one knight's fee in Brittricheston, Devon, held by Thomas de Brittricheston, worth 100s. a year; one knight's fee in Blachesworth, Devon, held by Richard de Hywyssh and John de Asshel, worth 100s.; and a moiety of one knight's fee in Wycroft, held by Joan the widow of Richard de Teyngmuth, worth 40s.; one knight's fee in Chievelsfeld (Chisfield), held by John de Blumvill, worth 100s.; $1\frac{1}{2}$ knight's fees in Watton (Woodhall manor), held by Philip de Pelitof, worth £7 10s.; and four $\frac{1}{4}$ knight's fees in Boxen and Hoddesdon, held respectively by Alexander le Chaumberleyn, John de Brokesbourn, John de Langton, and Ralph Foxton and his wife Margery as of her inheritance; each worth 25s., all in Herts.⁹

Two years after her husband's death Petronilla contemplated marrying again; but whether she did so we have no evidence. On 15 December 1325 licence was issued "for good service done by Richard de Perers, for Petronilla, late wife of John de Benstede, tenant in chief, to marry the said Richard, if she will; but if she will not, then let that which pertains to the king of her marriage be saved to the king."¹⁰

Before passing on to the further history of the Benstede family, let us turn to their home, Benington, which to-day is considered to be one of the prettiest villages in England, or at least in the Home Counties. Under its Saxon ownership by the thegn Athelmar it had no doubt been prosperous in a small way. In Norman times under the De Valoignes and Fitz Walter it had played a part in the affairs of the realm. But under the De Balliols it sank into neglect, for those Scottish lords of the manor were absentees, preferring their northern homes to an abode in the south. No doubt Athelmar had built a humble church there for the spiritual welfare of his men; and in 1086 the Domesday Book record of a priest there shows that a church, probably the same small Saxon building, still stood, wherein the priest could carry on the sacred offices. But the Norman lords were more concerned with the construction and maintenance of the castle, and there is little likelihood that the fabric of the church received much attention, and still less enlargement, at their hands.

¹ *Feudal Aids*, I, 142. ² *Ibid.*, p. 352. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 379. ⁴ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1302-7, p. 67.

⁵ *Feet of Fines*, Essex, II, 68. ⁶ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1323-7, p. 229; *Cal. Fine Rolls*, III, 278, 279.

⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 20. ⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 258. ⁹ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1323-7, p. 296.

¹⁰ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1324-7, p. 200.

But the change of ownership of the manor which came about in 1303, through its purchase from Alexander de Balliol by John de Bensted, brought with it brighter days for the village. There is every evidence that Benington, besides being the head of their barony, became their home; a happy state of things which was reflected on the village generally and especially on its church fabric. It is probable, too, that the Benstedes, instead of repairing the ruinous castle, made a new home at Benington Park, which to-day is still tithe free.

All those who have written on Benington Church, judging by the eye, date the earliest work in the fabric as late thirteenth-century work; but, judging from the history of the village, we see how unlikely it is that any building of it can have taken place at that period. But John de Benstede, no doubt finding the church too small and mean for his manorial church, and also neglected and in great need of repair, had every reason for commencing its rebuilding on a scale more fitting to its sacred functions and for a burial place for his family. Hence the earliest features still remaining may be ascribed to the early fourteenth century; these are the south doorway of the chancel, the two north and south windows of the nave, the roodloft staircase and openings, and the blocked north doorway of the nave.

John de Benstede had four sons, Edmund, William, Guy and John, and a daughter, Margaret. Margaret is mentioned in a Feet of Fines which was executed in Michaelmas Term, 19 Edw. II, 1325-6.¹ It reads:

Humphrey de Waledene plaintiff. John de Wydyton and Alexander de Grantessdene deforciant. The manor of Ryklyng and 1 toft, 160 acres of land, and 15 acres of wood in Uggele, Berdene, and Bolyton. After acknowledgement the deforciant granted the tenements to the plaintiff and the heirs of his body to hold of the chief lords, with successive remainders to Petronilla late wife of John de Benstede for life, Humphrey son of Humphrey and Margaret daughter of John de Benstede and the heirs of the body of this Humphrey, Alexander and Adam his brothers and the heirs of the plaintiff.²

Humphrey de Waledene, junior, was probably Margaret's husband.

The sons are mentioned in a Feet of Fines executed in Michaelmas term, 20 Edw. II, 1326.³ This was apparently a resettlement of the manor of Great Stambridge on Petronilla following the death of her husband. It reads:

Petronilla late the wife of John de Benstede plaintiff. Robert de Aspale "chivaler," and William de Newport, parson of Redenhale, deforciant. The manor of Great Stanbregg and 6 acres of meadow and (40) acres of wood in Raurethe, Reylegh, Hockele, Estwode and Rocheford and the advowson of a fourth part of the church of Great Stanbregg. Plaintiff acknowledged the tenements to be the right of Robert, as those which the deforciant have of her gift, and for this the deforciant granted them to the plaintiff to hold for life of the chief lords, with successive remainders to William son of John de Benstede and Guy, John and Edmund his brothers and the heirs of their bodies, and the right heirs of the plaintiff. Endorsed; Hugh le Fitz Simon puts in his claim.

Of the sons of John other than Edmund, his heir, little appears to be known. William married Agnes, daughter and heir of Walter de Nevill (d. 1329), the holder, under the Benstedes, of Stonebury manor in Little Horstead, Herts, and of a manor in King's Walden, Herts.⁴ William apparently died young without issue, and his widow afterwards married Thomas de Fythlynges. In 1359 they were holding the reversion of the third part of Great Stambridge manor by way of her dower.⁵

¹ *Feet of Fines, Essex*, II, 222.

² In a note on Rickling, by J. H. Round, in the *Essex Archaeological Society's Transactions* (New Series, XVI, 296-7) the author refers to the *Inq. p.m.* of Humphrey de Walden, 1331, where it is recorded that Humphrey held the manors of Rickling and Little Parndon for life with reversion to Petronilla, late the wife of John de Benstede. But because Rickling manor descended thereafter in the Walden family, and is not mentioned in the *Inq. p.m.* of Petronilla, 1342, he considered that the words italicised above referred to Little Parndon only. However this Feet of Fines proves the statement in Humphrey's *Inq. p.m.* to be correct, and covering Rickling.

³ *Feet of Fines, Essex*, II, 229. ⁴ *V.C.H. Herts*, III, 35; IV, 76.

⁵ See the *Inq. p.m.* of John de Benstede, 1359; at p. 29, *et seq.*

Edmund, son and heir of John and Petronilla, was born at Rosamunde¹ on 2 July 1312. On his father's death his lands were taken into the king's hands and he was put under the wardship of his mother, John de Stonor, and Robert de Popham.² In 1333, when he came of age, an Inquisition was held preparatory to his obtaining seisin of his lands.³ It read as follows:

EDMUND, SON AND HEIR OF JOHN DE BENSTED, who held of the King Edward II, in chief.⁴

Writ to the Escheator to take proof of age of the said Edmund, 1 July, 7 Edw. III. (1333.)

MIDDLESEX. Proof of age, 15 July, 7 Edw. III. (1333.)

(The evidence of the twelve witnesses who were examined at this Inquisition are full of interesting details. Only the two most important need be repeated here.)

William le Rous, aged 60 years and more, says that the said Edmund is 21 years of age, for he was born at Rosamunde on the feast of SS. Processus and Martinianus, viz. 2 July, 5 Edward II, and baptised in the church of St. Margaret's, Westminster, which he knows because on that day he was present in the said church, and saw the chaplain baptizing the said heir and noting the day of his birth in the missal of the said church.

Thomas le Barber, aged 44 years and more . . . knows it because he was then with Lady Mary, sister of King Edward II, at Ambresbury, and was sent thence by her to the said John de Benstede, father of the said heir to the place of Rosamund, and he came there the second day of the birth of the said heir, and immediately returned to the said Lady Mary, informing her of the birth of the said heir, for which message she bestowed on him 30s., with which he put himself into the trade of barber the following year.

Edmund de Benstede survived less than two years after coming of age. He died in 1334-5,⁵ leaving a young wife, Matilda, and two infant sons, John, his heir, and Edmund. The latter is mentioned in Petronilla's *Inquisitio post mortem* in 1342 as her eventual heir in her property at Kimpton, Herts;⁶ but as nothing further appears to be known about him he may have died young.

At Edmund's *Inquisitio post mortem* held on 1 February, 8 Edward III (1334-5),⁷ it was found that in Essex "he held no lands, etc., on the day he died . . . for a long time before his death he alienated his manor of Wlcomestowe to Robert de Morle and William de Playford and their heirs; which manor is held of the king in chief; but whether the king's licence for the said alienation was obtained or not, is unknown." Inquisitions regarding his property in other counties have not survived. In an Inquisition held in 1333,⁸ Matilda was holding 40 acres of land, etc., in Walthamstow.

The aforesaid alienation had not received the royal sanction; and on 18 September 1334,⁹ Matilda was pardoned for acquiring for life with remainder to John her son, from Robert de Morle and William de Playford, a messuage, 140 acres of land, 8½ acres of meadow, and 7 acres of pasture in Welcomstowe, which they had acquired in fee from Edmund her husband, and for not obtaining licence for either transfer. Twelve days later¹⁰ she was pardoned for trespasses with respect of the reversion expectant on the demise of Beatrice, wife of John de Blomvill, of a messuage, 45 acres of land, 31 acres of meadow, and 30s. rent, in Welcomstowe, which had been granted successively by Alexander de Baliolf to John de Benstede in fee, by Edmund, son and heir of the latter, to Robert de Morle and William de Playford in fee, and by these to her for life with remainder to her son John in fee. It was granted that on the death of Beatrice she should take possession.

¹ John de Benstede's house, Rosemont at Eye, near Westminster.

² Of Binsted Popham manor in Binsted *juxta* Alton, Hants. John de Benstede held his manor of Binsted as of the manor of Binsted Popham. John de Stonor was also on 20 May 1324 made keeper of Ermyngton manor, Devon. (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, III, 277; IV, 385.)

³ Seisin was granted on 3 August 1333. (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 1333-7, p. 71.) ⁴ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Quarto), VII, p. 382.

⁵ He never inherited Harpesfield Hall as his mother Petronilla was holding it in dower. It is necessary here and later to refer specially to this manor, as the *V.C.H. Herts* (II, 416) is very erroneous concerning its descent.

⁶ See below and footnote, p. 28.

⁷ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Quarto), VII, p. 398.

⁸ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), II, p. 56.

⁹ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1334-8, p. 24.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

After Beatrice de Gravele's death in 1336-7, the escheator was ordered to deliver to Matilda the Walthamstow property detailed above which Beatrice had held for life by grant of Robert de Morle and William de Playford.¹ Morle and Playford were also pardoned for acquiring from Edmund de Benstede in fee 24 acres of pasture in Benstede, Hants, and the £20 rent in Wyntreslowe, without licence, and were given licence to grant the same to Matilda with remainder to her son John.²

Matilda survived John, who died in 1358, until 1380.³ At her *Inquisitio post mortem* in that year it was found that she held in dower rent £12 13s. 4d. and £7 6s. 8d. from Wyntreslowe manor,⁴ with reversion to Edward, brother and heir of John, son of John, son of Edmund.⁵

John, son of Edmund and Matilda de Benstede, was born at Benington on 14 July 1332. Being a minor, he and his lands were taken into the king's hands. On 3 September 1337 they were put into the custody of Walter de Mauny,⁶ of Knebworth manor, near Benington. On 18 April 1339 Mauny gave the custody of John to John's grandmother Petronilla, but retained charge of the lands.⁷ Hence, on 26 November 1339,⁸ after the death of Beatrice de Gravele, a messuage and a carucate of land at Higham were handed over to him; and on 14 May 1342, following the death of Petronilla, Benington, Harpesfield and Little Parndon, etc., also.⁹

Although still a minor, John had to pay his quota towards the Aid of 1346, which was levied for the knighting of the king's eldest son. In Cambs, xxs. was required from John de Benstede, John de Dullyng-ham, Nicholas Thone and John de Astone for $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. in Ditton Valois which was held of Edmund de Pakenham, of which John de Benstede held the part which a certain John de Benstede kt. formerly held; and the other three held the part which was formerly held by William de St. Ivo.¹⁰ At Ermyngton, Devon, John de Stonor and the prior of Plympton were assessed at xij s. iiij d. for $\frac{1}{3}$ k.f. held of the honor of Plympton which John de Benstede formerly held.¹¹ In Essex John de Benstede was assessed at xls. for the 1 k.f. which he held in Great Stambridge which John Fitz Simon formerly held.¹² In Herts, John de Brokesbourn, Margery de Foxton, Thomas (Ty), and John (de B)lounville held $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. in Boxe of John de Benstede who is under age and in the custody of Walter de Mauny formerly . . . of William Chamberleyn and of the heirs of John le Salmoner there.¹³ At Todenham, Suffolk, John de Benstede held $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. of the honor of Clare which Thomas de Burgh formerly held of the Earl of Gloucester.¹⁴ It was in respect of this Suffolk property that John, on 20 May 1346, paid 5 marks to provide a hobeler for army service of the king going overseas.¹⁵

Walter de Mauny's duties ceased in 1355¹⁶ after John had come of age. He then owed him 500 marks. John agreed that if he would pay 100 marks in the church of St. Thomas de Acres in the Chepe on the quinzaine of Michaelmas next (which he did on 13 October), £50 on the quinzaine of the following Easter (which he did on 18 July 1357), and £50 on the quinzaine of Michaelmas following (which he apparently did not), the debt should be cancelled.¹⁷

But before 1353 John's great-grandmother Beatrice de Gravele had died in 1336-7; and his grandmother Petronilla in 1342. Petronilla's *Inquisitio post mortem* is prefaced by an interesting note by the escheator recording the reception which he met with on his official visit to Great Stambridge on that occasion in accordance with the writ issued on 9 April 1342.¹⁸

Memorandum by the escheator that he went to the manor of Great Stanbrugge, which was of the said Petronilla, and is within the liberty of Philippa, queen of England, in the hundred of Rochford, to take the manor into the king's hands, and to do what was

¹ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1337-8, p. 18. ² *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³ On 16 September 1380, the escheator was ordered to take the lands which she had held in dower into the king's hands. (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, IX, 259.)

⁴ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), III, 28. ⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, IX, 242.

⁶ The wardship of the lands had been committed, on 25 March 1337, to John de Sordych. (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, V, 518.) Presumably he had died before 3 September. Walter de Mauny presented to Benington Church in 1345, 1351 and 1352. (Cussans: *Broadwater Hundred*, p. 136.) Rosamund manor was put under the charge of Master John de Hildeslee, the king's clerk. On 9 March 1339 he was licensed to fell as many elm trees there as were necessary for repairs. (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1338-40, p. 213.)

⁷ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1338-40, p. 243. ⁸ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1339-41, p. 296. ⁹ *Ibid.*, 1341-43, p. 432.

¹⁰ *Feudal Aids*, I, 158. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 399. ¹² *Ibid.*, II, 161. ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 436. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, V, 79.

¹⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, V, 518. ¹⁶ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1354-8, p. 201. ¹⁷ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1354-67, p. 189.

¹⁸ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Quarto), VIII, 249, 250. On 8 April the escheators had been ordered to take her lands into the king's hands. (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, V, 287.)

incumbent on his office, according to the king's writ; and Geoffrey de Cotes deputy of John de Monte Gomery steward of the said queen, with the bailiff of the said liberty, and others unknown, did not permit him to fulfil his office. He commanded the said bailiff to bring before him jurors to make the inquisition, but he refused, asserting that the king's escheator ought not to intervene in anything within the said liberty, wherefore the escheator could do nothing further in execution of the writ. The residue of the execution appears in the annexed inquisitions. (The said Petronilla) had no lands, etc., in Middlesex on the day she died.

ESSEX. *Inq.* taken at Chelmeresford, 26 April, 16 Edw. III. (1342.)

Little Perndon. The manor (extent given) with the advowson of the church, held for life by the gift of John de la Mare, who held it of the aforesaid Petronilla, as of the manor of Benigton, by service of $1\frac{1}{2}$ k.f., with remainder to Edmund, son of John de Benestede and his heirs, to hold of the king in chief. The said services are extinguished by the aforesaid acquisition.

HERTFORD. *Inq.* 24 April, 16, Edw. III.

Benyngton. The manor (extent given)¹ with the advowsons of the church held in dower, of the inheritance of John son and heir of Edmund de Benstede, who held of the king in chief, as of the crown by service of 5 k.fs.

Harpesfield. The manor (extent given)² held for her life of the abbot of St. Albans by service of doing fealty to the said abbot, rendering him 15s. yearly, and doing suit at his court every three weeks, of the inheritance of the said John son and heir of Edmund de Benestede.

Hatherfeld.³ A plot of ground not built upon and 90a. of land, held for her life of the said inheritance, whereof the said plot and 50a. land are held of the bishop of Ely by service of doing homage and fealty to him and rendering him 3s. yearly; and 40a. land are held of Hugh Fitz Simond⁴ by service of doing him homage and fealty, and rendering him 2s. yearly.

¹ In which manor is a capital messuage (manor-house) with edifices appertaining to the same, worth 40d. per annum beyond reprisals; a pigeon-house worth nothing, being in decay; 2 gardens the produce of which is worth per annum 2s.; fruit of the same, 3s.; 300 acres of arable land, of which two parts may be sown yearly, and, if sown, worth 66s. and 8d., value per acre 4d.; when not sown, the pasture of the same two parts is worth per annum 16s. and 8d., value per acre one penny and not more, because that third part is very stony, and consequently the grass is thin. . . . The said two parts were sown before the death of Petronilla, but the third part, 100 acres, is worth 13s. and 4d., value per acre one penny and not more for the reason above said; 10 acres of meadow worth per annum 20s.; and two parks, the herbage of which is worth per annum 40s., but there is no underwood on account of the shade of the trees; rent of assize of free tenants as well as bondmen, 100s., payable at the Feasts of Easter, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, St. Michael, and the Nativity of our Lord equally; 200 works (days' work) of customary tenants due from Michaelmas to the first of August, worth for that time 8s. and 4d., the value of each work one half-penny; 60 works to be done by the same customary tenants from the first of August to the Feast of St. Michael, worth for that time 5s., the value of each work one penny; a windmill worth beyond reprisals 20s. per annum; perquisites of court worth per annum half a marc. (Cussans, *Broadwater Hundred*, p. 126.)

² In which manor is a capital messuage worth nothing beyond reprisals; a garden, of which the herbage is worth 2s., and the fruit 3s. per annum; six score acres of arable land, of which two parts can be sown yearly and were sown before the death of Petronilla, when sown are worth 26s. and 8d., the price of an acre 4d.; and when not sown worth nothing because lying fallow. And one wood, the herbage and underwood of which is worth nothing by reason of the shade of the trees. (Cussans, *Cashio Hundred*, p. 294.)

³ Chewells manor. ⁴ Probably the reputed manor of Herons.

Almeshoe. The manor held in dower of the inheritance of Hugh Fitz Simond, who holds of John Fitz Walter by service of 1 k.f.: and the said manor is worth £10.¹

Kymeton.² A messuage and 80a. land held for her life (worth 20s. a year),³ with remainder to Maud late the wife of Edmund de Benstede for her life, with remainder to Edmund, son of the said Edmund, and his heirs for ever, of Peter de la Mare, of Offeleye, by service of doing him homage and fealty, and rendering him 20s. yearly, and suit of court every three weeks.

She held no other land in this county.

Writ, 5 May, 16 Edw. III. (1342.)

CAMBRIDGE. *Inq.* taken at Newmarket, 27 May, 16 Edw. III. (1342.)

Chavele, Ditton Cameys and Wodeditton. Three messuages, 3 carucates land, wood, rent, etc. (extent given) held for life, of the gift of Adam Fitz Simon and Walter Grapinel, by fine levied in the court of King Edward II, with remainder to Guy son of John de Benstede and the heirs male of his body, of John de Punteneye by homage and by service of 21s. yearly.

John son of Edmund de Benstede son of John de Benstede aged variously as 8 and 10 or more, is her next heir.

Turning back to Benington Church, we find that Petronilla had continued to carry out the plan for its rebuilding which her husband had started. Two fourteenth-century windows on the north side of the north chapel show that that chapel was built during her widowhood as a resting place for the family dead. This chapel opens into the chancel by an arcade of two arches.

Beneath the easternmost of these two arches is a fine altar tomb which has shields bearing the arms of Benstede and Moyne. On the evidence of these shields and the style of the tomb (which like the earliest features of the church has been dated too early) the historians have credited John de Benstede (d. 1323) with another wife, Petronilla *née* Moyne, making three wives in all, thus confusing Petronilla Grapynell with the Petronilla Moyne of two generations later.⁴

John de Benstede came of age in 1353, and an Inquisition was accordingly held.⁵

Writ of proof of age on the petition of John son and heir of Edmund de Benstede, whose lands, etc., are in the custody of Walter de Mauny, 5 July, 27 Edw. III. (1353.)

HERTFORD. Proof of age taken at St. Albans, Wednesday before St. Margaret 27 Edw. III. (1353.) The twelve witnesses include Henry Melkssop and Walter Revel.

Henry Melkssop, aged 54 years or more, says that the said John was 21 years of age on 14 July last, and this he knows because the said John was born at Benyngton, Herts, and baptised in the church there, and he was present in the church when the birth was enrolled in the missal there by Hugh, rector of the church of Walkern,⁶ on 14 July, 6 Edw. III. (1332.)

Walter Revel, aged 49, witnessed likewise that he was present and saw the rector Hugh enter the record in the missal.

Following this Inquisition John de Benstede received seisin of his property.⁷ He forthwith granted Harpesfield manor in socage to Andrew Aubrey of London for ten years, and the lease descended to Andrew's son and heir John. After John de Benstede's death, John Aubrey, on 16 February 1359⁸ petitioned

¹ Cussans, *Hitchin Hundred*, p. 114.

² The manor of Leigh or Lygh, which Sir Edward Benstede kt. was holding at his death in 1518. Its earlier history is unrecorded. On 14 October 1342, the escheator was instructed not to meddle with it, as Petronilla had held it for life, with remainder to Matilda, Edmund's wife for life, with remainder to Edmund their son. (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 1341-3, p. 598.)

³ *Ibid.* ⁴ See below, p. 29. ⁵ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Quarto), X, p. 121.

⁶ Hugh, rector of Walkern, may have been either Hugh de Crevur, instituted on 18 August 1318, or Hugh de Rethell, died 1361.

⁷ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1349-54, pp. 551, 556. ⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, VII, 88, 95.

the king for the restoration of the manor, which had been taken into the king's hands, for the remainder of the term. This was granted by the king committing it to him for that remainder at an annual rent of 52s. At the expiration of the lease, on 1 January 1364,¹ the king gave its wardship (as two parts of the manor) to Petronilla during the heir's minority, the third part having been already assigned to her in dower on 31 May 1360.

The names of John de Bedenstede and Dions. Bedenstede occur in the roll of the Court Baron of Higham Benstede of 1354.²

Judging from the fact that on 9 November 1354,³ John de Benstede, as a king's yeoman, was exempted from service on assizes, juries, etc., or from holding office as mayor, sheriff, etc., it would appear that he was not physically strong; and this is corroborated by his early death at the age of 27 about July 1358.⁴ He had married Petronilla Moyne who survived him until 1378. Between them they have left many indications of the work which they did to the fabric of Benington Church. Amongst the remains of fourteenth-century glass which survive in the windows of the nave are the arms of Benstede and Moyne. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the borders of the easternmost window on the south side of the nave contain the "castle" motif which was introduced into England through the marriage of Edward I with Eleanor of Castile. The *Inventory of Historical Monuments of Herts* and the *Victoria County History of Herts* both date the nave roof as fifteenth century, and the former says that the clerestory was added late in that century. But the bosses which decorate the roof are carved with the arms of Benstede and Moyne, which prove the roof to be fourteenth-century work, and the clerestory must therefore be of the same date also. The tower, too, which the *Inventory* calls fifteenth-century building, has carved in the buttress niches on its exterior the much-weathered arms of Benstede and Moyne, here again labelling the work of John and Petronilla.

Their personal monument, if any other such were necessary, is the fine altar tomb (already mentioned as wrongly ascribed) beneath the easternmost arch of the arcade between the north chapel and the chancel. The sides of this tomb are carved with canopied niches for the reception of small statues, and between them are shields bearing the arms of Benstede, *Gules, three bars gemelles Or*, and Moyne, *Azure, a fess dancetté Or between six cross-crosslets Argent*.⁵ In the top of the tomb lie the recumbent effigies of John and Petronilla. He is habited in mail armour, and wears a cyclas reaching below his knees. A round helmet covers his head, which rests on two cushions set arras-wise. His right hand grasps his sword hilt, while his left holds the scabbard. His legs are crossed, and his feet, armed with prick-spurs, rest on a couchant lion. The lady by his side wears a long loose robe falling in ample folds to her feet, which rest on two dogs.

At the same time as this tomb was erected the arch above it was enriched with pinnacles and crocket cresting. The corbels of the hoodmoulding are carved with grotesque heads. The easternmost one on the north side, shows a king with a sword thrust through his stomach. This is said to represent the murder of Edward II at Berkeley Castle in 1327.

After the death of John de Benstede the usual *Inquisitiones post mortem* were held;⁶ as follows:

Writ 12 January, 32 Edw. III. (1359.)

WILTS. *Inq.* taken at Salisbury, 16 February, 33 Edw. III. (1360.)

Wyntreslewe. £20 yearly rent held of the king in chief by service of $\frac{1}{4}$ k.f., whereof Maud, late wife of Edmund de Benstede, holds in dower £12 13s. 4d.

He held no other lands, etc., in the county.

He died on 29 June last. John his son and heir is aged 5 years.

SOUTHAMPTON. *Inq.* taken at Basingstoke, 13 February, 33 Edw. III.

Benstede. A messuage, 87a. arable, 1½a. meadow, 10a. pasture, 1½a. wood, and 7s. yearly rent held of the heir of John de Popham, kt., as of his manor of Popham, in socage by service of 40s. yearly.

¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, VII, p. 269. ² *W.A.S. Monograph* 6, p. 6. ³ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1354-8, p. 137.

⁴ On 12 January 1358-9, the escheators were ordered to take his lands into the king's hands. (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, VII, 85.)

⁵ The arcading survives to-day only on the south side and half of the west front, and the small statues of weepers are fragmentary.

⁶ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Quarto), X, 372-4.

CAMBRIDGE. *Inq.* Wednesday before St. Valentine, 33 Edw. III. (1360.)

Dytton Valoys. A toft, 57*a.* land, 2*a.* pasture, 6*a.* wood, and 12*s.* 10*d.* rent held of Mary, late wife of John de Pakenham, by knight's service and by service of 3*s.* 2*d.* yearly and suit at her court of Dytton Valoys every three weeks; 82*a.* land held of Nicholas Loveyne by service of 5*s.* 4*d.* yearly and suit of his court of Dytton Valoys every three weeks.

Kertelynge. 1*a.* land and 2*a.* meadow held of Guy de Warwick by service of 2*s.* yearly.

Chevele. A manor (extent given) held of Nicholas Loveyne by knight's service and 21*s.* yearly rent and suit of court every three weeks; 3½*a.* land held of the earl of Oxford by service of 12*d.* yearly; 8*a.* land held of Margaret, late wife of William Sybely, by service of 1*d.* yearly and suit of court.

Asshele, Sylverle and Saxton. A toft, 60*a.* land and 5*s.* 6*d.* rent held of the prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England by knight's service.

Chevele. 3*a.* land held of John Baggulf by service of 6*d.* yearly.

Asshele. 3*a.* land held of John Coleman by service of 6*d.* yearly.

He died on the feast of St. Margaret last at the tomb of St. Katherine.

Writ, 12 January, 32 Edw. III. (1359.)

ESSEX. *Inq.* taken at Great Stanbrugge, Tuesday after the Purification, 33 Edw. III.

Great Stanbrugge. Two parts of the manor (extent given), including a water-mill liable to floods of salt water, and a leet on the feast of St. Barnabas, held of Philippa, queen of England, as of the honor of Reghleye by knight's service, together with the reversion of the third part, which Thomas de Fythlynges and Agnes his wife, formerly wife of William de Benstede, hold by way of her dower. The premises are charged with the payment of 44*s.* 5½*d.* yearly to Richard de Haveryng, kt.

Raureth. Two parts of 5*a.* meadow held as above of William Doreward as of the manor of Raureth by service of 6*d.* yearly.

He died about the feast of St. Margaret last, as the jury understand by the account of one . . . who was his chamberlain, and was with him at his death.

ESSEX. *Inq.* taken at Little Perndon, 29 January, 33 Edw. III. (1360.)

Little Perndon (extent given, including a plot enclosed to make a park containing 10*a.*) with the advowson of the church, a parcel of which is held of the earl of Hereford and Essex by service of 5*s.* 4*d.* yearly, a parcel of the abbot and convent of Bylegh by service of 3*s.* yearly, and the residue with the advowson of the church of the king in chief as parcel of the manor of Benyngton.

Wolcomestowe. A tenement called Hegham (extent given) held of the king in chief as parcel of the manor of Benyngton; a tenement called Benstedes (extent given, including 160*a.* arable, in common and in the forest), whereof a parcel is held of the abbot of Waltham Holy Cross by service of 5*s.* yearly, an acre is held of the rector of the church of Chynggeford by service of 1*d.*, and the residue of the earl of Warwick by service of 8*s.* and suit of court every three weeks.

Thomas, chamberlain of the deceased, who was with him at his death at the tomb of St. Katherine, says that he died there about the feast of St. Margaret last.

HERTFORD. *Inq.* taken at Benyngton, 28 January, 33 Edw. III. (1360.)

Benyngton. The manor (extent given), with the advowson of the church, including a park called "the Great Park," a wood called Haylewod, a wind-mill standing idle and a leet held on Monday in Whitsun week, held of the king in chief by service of 1 k.f.

Park Street (*Villa de Parco Soca*). The manor of Harpesfeld (extent given) held of the abbot of St. Albans in socage by service of fealty, rendering 15s. yearly and doing suit at the abbot's court every three weeks. This manor the deceased demised to Andrew Aubrey, citizen of London, to hold from the feast of St Peter's Chains, 27 Edward III, until the following Michaelmas and for ten years from then; the said Andrew's executors were in possession from the day of his death until the death of John de Benstede.

Bishop's Hatfield. The tenement called Cheweles¹ viz. a toft, 80a. land, 30s. rent, and a rent of 18 hens, a part of which is held of the bishopric of Ely by homage and fealty and by service of 3s. yearly, and the remainder of Hugh Fitz Symond by homage and fealty and service of 2s. yearly.²

From what branch of the family of Moyne Petronilla came has never been decided, but that she was an heiress is evident from the frequent representation of her arms in Benington Church. It is more than likely however that they lived in the neighbourhood of Hertford at Stapleford and Hertingfordbury, although they do not figure in the local history of those places as manor lords. In the thirteenth century the family was holding lands in Roxford manor, Hertingfordbury.³ Amongst the deeds relating to Woodhall Park, Watton, which belonged to the late Major E. P. Smith, are a number of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century deeds concerning the manor of Sele in St. Andrew's Parish, Hertford, to which various members of the Moyne family appear as witnesses. Some of them, of the thirteenth century, are undated and bear the names of Robert le Moyne of Stapleford, John le Moyne of Stapleford, and John le Moyne of Roxford; dated deeds have, in 1262, John le Moyne of Roxford; in 1286, 1316 and 1318, John le Moyne; and in 1335 and 1347, Stephen le Moyne. Other deeds relate to Gobion manor, Stapleford. One of them, of about 1290, is a release of certain rents in the manor by John, son of John le Moyne, to Roger Lanfar. The latest date at which they appear is 1347. The family was probably ancestors to that of Mynne of Hertingfordbury recorded there in 1581.⁴

Petronilla appears to have contemplated another marriage after the death of John de Benstede, for on 15 January 1366 she received "licence for £20 paid to the king by Pernell late the wife of John de Benstede 'chivaler' for her to marry whomsoever she will of the king's fealty."⁵

John and Petronilla had at least two sons, John the heir born in 1353, and Edward, both minors at the time of their father's death. A third son was another John, who may perhaps be identified with the John de Benstede, parson of Tradyngton (Trotton) in Chichester diocese, who was presented to Aldermaston vicarage, Salisbury diocese, on 9 April 1386.⁶

On 1 May 1359 the escheator was ordered to apportion Benington manor into three parts and to deliver one part to the widowed Petronilla, but she was not to marry without the king's licence.⁷ On the 30th, John's lands were put in the charge of Richard Punchardon, a scion of the Punchardon family of Punchardon Hall, Willian, Herts.⁸ These lands consisted of the other two parts of Benington manor, and all the lands and rents in Raureth and Welcomstowe, Essex; Dyton Valeys, Dyton Camoys, Kertlyngg, Chevele, Asshele, Silverlee and Saxton, in Cambs, and Wyntreslowe (i.e. the £20 rent), Wilts.⁹ On 31 May, the

¹ Probably the reputed manor of Herons. See p. 33.

² In addition to this *Inquisitio p.m.* there followed later, for some reason which is not apparent, two other Inquisitions regarding John de Benstede's property. One, in 1362, found that he held two parts of Great Stambridge manor as of the honor of Reilegh. The other, in 1368, found that he held a tenement called Waterhalle in the hamlet of Higham in Walcumstowe, as parcel of Benington manor, and Benstede lands in Essex. (*Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), II, 246, 285.)

³ *V.C.H. Herts*, III, 465.

⁴ An altar tomb, with effigy, in the church, is that of Anne Calvert, *née* Mynne, 1618. Chauncy and Clutterbuck record floor slabs with inscriptions to George Mynne (d. 1581) and his wife Elizabeth, *née* Wroth (d. 1614), and to Robert Mynne (d. 1656) and his wife Helen (d. 1659).

⁵ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1364-7, p. 193. In *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), III, 11, she is called wife of John de Neustede: probably an error for Benstede.

⁶ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1385-9, p. 144. In 1384, a John de Benstede was one of five justices who heard a case at Westminster. (*Rolls of Parliament*, III, 188, 194.)

⁷ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1354-60, p. 558. The king evidently assigned also to her tenements and rent in Bensted, as on 31 May the escheator was ordered to deliver them to her. (*Ibid.*, p. 562.)

⁸ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1358-61, p. 252; 1364-7, p. 294. *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1364-8, p. 272.

⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, VII, 96.

king consigned to Eleanor¹ (she having taken oath not to marry without the king's licence), with the assent of Richard Punchardon who had charge of two-thirds of all John's lands during his minority, one-third of Benington manor extended to £8 7s. a year, a toft and 80 acres of land in Hatfield worth 10s. 6d. a year, 30s. rent in Hatfield and a rent of 18 hens worth 2s. 3d. a year, one-third of Harpesfield manor worth 17s. 4d. a year, Little Parndon manor worth £10 10s. 7d. a year, one-third of two-thirds of Great Stambridge manor worth 40s. a year, a messuage, 87 acres of land, 1½ acres of meadow, 10 acres of pasture, 1½ acres of wood and 7s. rent in Bensted, Hants, worth 40s. a year, and 5s. 2d. rent yearly from Benington.² On 12 June 1359 Petronilla petitioned the king that she had had no maintenance for herself and her children, nor any payment of dower since her husband's death, and he accordingly granted her £20.³ Five days later⁴ Richard Punchardon was instructed to permit her and Thomas Mauredyn, administrators of the late John's estate, to reap and carry the corn growing at Benington and Higham which was sown by John or his servants. On 16 November 1359 the escheator was ordered not to meddle with the two-thirds of Great Stambridge manor in delivery of its issues to Queen Philippa as at the *Inquisitio p.m.* of John de Benstede it had been found that he held it of the queen as of the honor of Reylegh.⁵ On 1 March 1361 the escheator was instructed to deliver to Petronilla the moiety of one knight's fee in Chesfield held by John de Blomvill worth 50s., one-third of a moiety of one knight's fee in Watton held by Philip Pelitot worth 50s., Little Parndon manor worth 10s. and half of the presentation to Benington Church worth £20, which the king had assigned to her.⁶

Petronilla de Neustede (*sic*) died in 1378. She held Great Stambridge, consisting of 50 acres of land, 1 acre of meadow, 1 acre of marsh, and 33 shillings rent, parcel of the manor of Great Stambridge as of the honor of Reylegh. At Benington she held a part of the manor containing a messuage, 100 acres of land, 3 acres of meadow, 30 acres of wood and 30 shillings rent.⁷ On 8 September 1378, the escheator was ordered to take into the king's hands all the lands which she had held in dower.⁸

Petronilla's eldest son John died without issue in 1366; as is proved by the fact that on 18 May 1366 Richard Punchardon was granted the marriage of Edward, *son and heir* of John de Benstede.⁹ No *Inquisitio post mortem* was held then at John's death as he was a minor, but ten years later, just previous and preparatory to Edward's coming of age. Hitherto 1376 has, on the strength of this Inquisition, always been given as the date of John's death. At this Inquisition in 1376,¹⁰ it was found that his property had comprised £20 rent in Wyntreslowe, Wilts; 87 acres of land in Binsted, Hants, as of the manor of Popham; Higham a tenement, Bensted in Welcomstowe, a tenement, Little Parndon manor, Great Stambridge manor, Raureth manor, and Benington manor as of the honor of Reilegh, all in Essex; Benington manor, Harpesfield manor, and lands and tenements in Cheweles in Hatfield, all in Herts; Chevele manor, Ditton Camois manor, and lands and tenements in Ditton Waleis, Kertlinge, Asshele, Silverlee, Caxton, and Chevele; all in Cambs.

Edward de Benstede, born in 1355, came of age in 1376, and, owing to the death of his elder brother, inherited all the family estates, of which he received seisin on 23 March 1376.¹¹ On 2 December 1378, the escheator was directed to deliver to him 50 acres of land, 1 acre of meadow, 1 acre of marsh, 1½ acres of wood, and 33s. 4d. rent in Great Stambridge manor, which had been held in dower by Petronilla who had just died, and one-third of a messuage, 100 acres of land, 3 acres of meadow, 30 acres of wood and 30s. rent in Benington manor.¹² On 5 February 1380 the king confirmed to him and his heirs the weekly market and annual fair at Benington, which had been granted to his ancestor John de Benstede by a charter dated at Brustwyk on 26 November, 33 Edw. I.¹³ In 1379-80 he was sheriff of Essex and Herts,¹⁴ and again in 1399-1400; on the latter occasion being pardoned for being in arrear in his accounts to the amount of £157 10s. 8d.,¹⁵ perhaps because he had lent 100 marks to the king on 15 August 1397.¹⁶ He was on the Commission of Peace of Herts in 1381, 1382, 1384, 1389, 1390 and 1401;¹⁷ of Array in 1385 and 1392;¹⁸ of

¹ This must, I think, be a misprint for Matilda, the widow of Edmund (d. 1334) who was still living and died in 1380.

² *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1354-60, p. 562. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 568. ⁴ *Ibid.* ⁵ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1354-60, p. 603.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1360-4, p. 161. ⁷ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), III, 11. ⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, IX, 153.

⁹ *Ibid.*, VII, 330. ¹⁰ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), II, 353. ¹¹ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1374-7, p. 302.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1377-81, p. 167. ¹³ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1377-81, p. 428. ¹⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, IX, 171.

¹⁵ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, p. 432; 1399-1401, p. 480, 485; *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XII, 19.

¹⁶ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1396-9, p. 178.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1381-5, pp. 86, 139, 245, 347, 590; 1388-92, pp. 137, 139, 341, 344; 1399-1401, p. 557.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1381-85, p. 590; 1391-96, p. 92.



Photo

Latchmore, Hitchin

THE BENSTEDE TOMBS, BENINGTON CHURCH, HERTS.



Photo

Latchmore, Hitchin

TOMB OF SIR JOHN BENSTEDE, d. 1350, AND HIS WIFE PETRONILLA, NÉE MOYNE, d. 1378, BENINGTON CHURCH, HERTS.

Weirs in 1398;¹ and in 1401, for levying an aid for the marriage of Blanche, the king's eldest daughter.² By 1385 he had been knighted, and sat as one of the two members for Herts in the parliaments of 1384, 1397, 1399, and 1402.³ Twice the king exempted him from serving on assizes, juries, inquests, etc., and from being made mayor, sheriff, escheator, coroner, justice, bailiff, constable, collector, assessor, surveyor, etc.; the first occasion being on 5 February 1385,⁴ and the second, 15 September 1412.⁵ This was probably in order to leave him free for other important public business; but the account of his activities shows that he did not take great advantage of the exemptions. In 1402 he served on a commission at Hitchin, Herts, concerning the fourth third of the hundreds of Broadwater and Hitchin.⁶ On 24 March 1404 he was appointed on a commission to levy a subsidy for the defence of the realm.⁷ On 18 October 1410 he sat on a commission to hear the case of a strike by the bondmen of the abbot of Waltham at Waltham, Nazing, Epping and Loughton.⁸ On 11 January 1414 he was on another to arrest and imprison Lollards,⁹ and in 1417 on another strike case of the bondmen of the abbot of St. Albans at Chipping Barnet.¹⁰ On 5 March 1419 he served on a commission of Array for defence against the King of Castile and Leon "who had prepared a great armada of ships and vessels and proposes to send it shortly to do harm to the king and his ships, and invade the realm."¹¹ This appears to have been the last activity of his public life.

Turning to Sir Edward's private affairs. Before 1384 he had married a lady named Alice, and we may presume that he then made a settlement of his property on himself and his wife by granting it all to John Dyssheford, parson of Watton-at-Stone, who would in turn regrant it to him and Alice. The evidence of this action is a document at the Public Record Office,¹² by which Sir Edward and Alice his wife appointed Richard Holbroke as their attorney to receive seisin of their lands in Cowlinge and Lidgate, Suffolk, of the gift and feoffment of John Dyssheford, parson of Watton-at-Stone, in Harpesfield Hall manor, and lands, etc., in St. Peter's parish, St. Albans, Hatfield, Kimpton, Kirtling, Ditton Camois, Ditton Waloys, Cheveley, Great Stambridge, etc.

With the birth of their children a more comprehensive settlement of the property became necessary, so in 1389 Sir Edward made another settlement¹³ of his estates on himself, his wife Alice and their sons John and Edward.

The terms of this settlement were that John Dyssheford, parson of Watton-at-Stone, gives to Sir Edward Benstede, kt., and Dame Alice his wife, all lands, rents, etc., which he had in Cowlinge and Lidgate, Suffolk, Harpesfield Hall manor, all his lands in St. Peter's, St. Albans, in Cromerhyde called Chewells and Herons, and in Kympton, Kertelynge, Ditton Waloys, Ditton Camoys, Chevele, Sulverleye, Saxtone, Asshele, Great Stambridge manor with the advowson, in Rochford, Raureth, Reyle, Estwode, Hokkele, and Haukewell, and Little Parndon manor with its watermill, all of which the grantor with Robert Peretre, rector of Benington, and John Dunton, had by the feoffment of Sir Edward, and of which the said Robert Peretre and John Dunton have made him a release thereof. After the death of Sir Edward and Dame Alice, Harpesfield Hall manor and lands in Cromerhyde and St. Peter's shall remain to their son John for life, and the other properties to their son Edward and his heirs. The reversion of Harpesfield Hall manor and lands in Cromerhyde and St. Peter's, after the death of John shall remain to Edward, and failing issue to "his" brother John.¹⁴

On 12 November 1401 the king, who was at the time at Hertford Castle, gave to Edward Benstede, kt., licence to enfeof Edward Benstede the younger and Robert Benstede his sons of 40 acres of land in Benington.¹⁵

¹ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1396-9, p. 372. ² *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XII, 148.

³ In 1384 he and Edmund atte Brooke were paid £15 4s. for having attended 38 days. (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 1381-5, p. 453.) In 1397, he and John Rugewyn received £9 12s. for 24 days, and in 1398 £12 8s. for 31 days. (*Ibid.*, 1396-9, pp. 135, 303.) Cussans says that John de Benstede was M.P. for Herts in 1400; possibly an error for Edward. (*Braughing Hundred*, p. 17.)

⁴ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1385-9, p. 101. ⁵ *Ibid.*, 1408-13, p. 426. ⁶ *Feudal Aids*, II, 442, 443.

⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XII, 254. ⁸ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1386-9, p. 313. ⁹ *Ibid.*, 1413-16, p. 177.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1416-22, p. 87, 143. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 210, 250. ¹² *P.R.O., Ancient Deeds*, D. 11039.

¹³ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1389-92, pp. 72, etc. This was executed at Benington on the Thursday before the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin (2 February).

¹⁴ The wording is ambiguous: "his" may refer to either Sir Edward's brother John, or back to Sir Edward's son John. The same ambiguity is noticeable in some of Sir Edward's later settlements.

¹⁵ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1401-05, p. 18.

By 1402 Sir Edward's wife Alice was dead and he had married Joan, daughter of Sir John Thornbury of Bygrave and Little Munden, Herts, sister and heir of Sir Philip Thornbury, and widow of William Greville (d. 1401) of Chipping Camden, Gloucs.¹ On 20 June that year the king granted him licence to enfeof Sir Philip Thornbury, his brother-in-law, and John Bellers, chaplain, of Benington manor and advowson and for them to regrant the same to him and his wife Joan and his heirs.²

In 1429 Sir Edward made a further settlement, when on 6 May the king gave him licence to enfeof Higham Benstede manor in Walkhamstowe except one acre of land, to Sir Philip Thornbury, John Fray, Leonard Stepulton, esq., and John Tymmes, clerk; and for them to regrant the same to himself and his wife Joan for life, with remainder to Edmund, his son and his heirs; and failing issue to Margaret, Alice and Petronilla his daughter and their heirs; and failing issue, to Edward his son and his heirs; and failing issue, to John his own brother and his heirs.³

As the final action in this settlement Thornbury, Fray and Stepulton appointed John Tymmes to give Sir Edward and Joan seisin of the property, as is recorded by a document at the Public Record Office.⁴

Sir Edward's other property settlements we shall see recorded in the Inquisitions which were held after his death.

When an Aid⁵ was levied in 1412, Sir Edward Benstede was recorded as holding lands and tenements in Kertlynge, Chevele, and Ditton, Cambs, worth *xxli*; Great Stambridge manor worth *xli*, diverse lands and tenements in Little Parndon called Bensteddeth worth *xli*, and Watirhall in Welcomstowe worth *xli*, all in Essex. In Hants he held lands, tenements and rent in Benstede worth *xs*; and in Herts, lands and tenements extended to *xli* rent per annum, which lay in Benington, Parksoken, Hatfield, Kimpton, etc., for which he was assessed to pay *xiijs. iiijd.* In Wilts he had lands, etc., in West Grymstede worth *xxli*.

At the levy in Aid⁶ of 1428 when *6s. 8d.* was required from each knight's fee, he paid that sum on Great Stambridge manor which John Fitz Simon formerly held.

Sir Edward died in 1432, leaving at least two sons, Edmund and Edward. It was found that he held Todenham manor,⁷ Suffolk, £20 rent in Wynterslowe, Wilts; a messuage and 40 acres of pasture within the forest of Wolmere and other lands, in Hants; Higham Benstede manor in Walkhamstowe, Little Perydon manor and advowson, Great Stambridge manor and advowson, and a member of the honor of Reylegh, all in Essex; and Chewells and Herons manors in Hatfield, Harpesfield manor and Le Legh manor, all in Herts.⁸

For the burial place of Sir Edward and Joan in Benington Church, an archway was cut through the wall between the north chapel and the chancel to the east of the arcading and was filled with a four-centred arch with tracery and shields in the spandrels. The soffits and inner faces of the jambs are panelled, and the apex of the soffit is carved with an angel bearing aloft in a kerchief small figures of the knight and his lady. This arch spans an altar tomb, arcaded on all but its east end, whereon rest the figures of Sir Edward and Joan. He is habited entirely in plate armour, and is armed with a sword and dagger. His head rests on a tilting helmet, surmounted by a wolf's head for crest, and his feet, which bear rowel spurs, on a lion. He wears the Lancastrian collar of SS. Joan is habited in a close-fitting dress nearly devoid of ornament. Her head rests on a cushion supported by three angels, and her feet on two dogs with bells around their necks. On the opposite (south) side of the chancel, at the same time, perhaps, to emphasise and light up the tomb more clearly, were inserted a square-headed window of three lights, and an arched window of four lights. (The westernmost window is modern.) The easternmost window was filled with stained glass, and to-day in the head of each light there still remains some of this fifteenth-century glass. It includes, in one light, the Benstede arms, in the second, those of Benstede impaling Thornbury (which have been reversed in releading), and in the third Benstede impaling a coat now missing. At the same time the chancel arch was widened and larger windows inserted in the clerestory of the nave.

¹ J. Edmondson: *Account of the noble family of Grenville*, 1766, pp. 3, 4. On 1 December 1405 the king pardoned Edward Benstede for having married the widow Joan Greville without licence. (*Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1405-8, p. 97.)

² *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1401-5, p. 104.

³ *Ibid.*, 1422-9, p. 539.

⁴ *P.R.O., Ancient Deeds*, D. 11278.

⁵ *Feudal Aids*, VI, 406, 439, 456, 460, 541.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 212.

⁷ Benstede manor in Tuddenham. The first Benstede recorded as holding it is Edmund in 1334, Sir Edward's grandfather. It descended with their other estates to Eleanor Benstede. (Copinger, *Manors of Suffolk*, IV, 203.)

⁸ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), IV, 140.

After Sir Edward's death it was found, on 30 November 1432,¹ that he had made a settlement of Little Parndon and its advowson by granting them to John Belers, parson of Benington, Henry Waryn of Ashwell and John Tymmes, chaplain; and they had granted them to him and Joan, his wife, for life with successive remainders to (1) Edmund Benstede, kt., his son and the heirs of his body, (2) Margaret, Alice and Petronilla, his daughters, and their heirs, (3) Edward, his son, and his heirs, (4) John, his brother, and his heirs. The premises, except 140 acres of land and 16 acres of pasture, were held in chief by service of $\frac{1}{4}$ k.f.; and the king's leave had not been given for these alienations. The king, a fine having been now paid, pardoned these trespasses and granted licence for Joan to have the premises again; and further instructed the escheator to hand them over to her. The escheator was also ordered on 4 December² to take her fealty for Higham Benstede manor and advowson, except one acre of land there, as Sir Edward at his death held the same, with the exception of the one acre, jointly with her by gift of Philip Thornbury and others. They were held of the king in chief by knight's service, except 40 acres of land and 5 acres of meadow in Higham Benstede, which were held of others than the king.

The escheator was not to meddle further with Chewells and Herons manors, as Sir Edward had held them by gift of John Belers, parson of Benington, and others, with remainder to his son John;³ nor with Harpesfield and Leyghe manors, as Sir Edward had held them for life of the feoffment of John Belers, parson of Benington and others, with remainder to Edward his son, now deceased. Edward, son of Edward the son and heir, is aged 9 years or more.⁴

Further the escheator is not to meddle with Todenham manor, as Sir Edward held it by feoffment of Richard Rikedoun and John Bekers, clerk, with remainder to his son, Sir Edmund and Eleanor, his wife.⁵

Bearing in mind that the main estates descended in the senior branch of the family headed by Edmund, but Harpesfield manor descended in the junior branch headed by Edward, sons of Sir Edward, we can make out, from these various settlements, the domestic history of Sir Edward and the number of his children.

In the first place Sir Edward had a brother John (if the settlements can be so read), who may perhaps be identified with John Benstede, parson of Tradyngton (Trotton) in Chichester diocese, who was presented to Aldermaston vicarage, Salisbury diocese, on 9 April 1386,⁶ or the justice who heard a case at Westminster in 1384.⁷

This Sir Edward married firstly Alice of family unknown, but who may have owned property at Cowlinge and Lidgate in Suffolk. His second wife, whom he had married by 1402, was Joan, daughter of Sir John Thornbury of Bygrave and Little Munden, Herts, who had been M.P. for Herts in 1382, 1385, 1390 and 1391. Through this marriage Sir Edward was patron of Bygrave rectory in 1415.

By 1389 Sir Edward and Alice had three sons, Edmund the heir, who together with Benington and Higham Benstede manors is not mentioned in the settlement of that date; Joan, who received Harpesfield and Cromerhyde (Chewells and Herons) for life with remainder to brother Edward; and Edward, who had all the other property. By 1401 presumably John was dead and another son, Robert, had been born, but nothing more is known of him. In 1429 the surviving children were Edmund and Edward and three daughters, Margaret, Alice and Petronilla; these daughters being presumably by the first wife.

On the death of his father in 1432, Edmund succeeded to the manors of Benington and Higham Benstede. At the levy in Aid, of 6s. 8d. on each knight's fee, in 1428, he had paid on $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f. which he held in Ditton Valoys, formerly held by John de Benstede.⁸ He had been knighted, and married a lady named Eleanor, and they had a son and heir, Ralph.⁹ On 11 July 1433 Sir Edmund confirmed to his mother Joan an estate for life in his manors, except the one acre in Higham Benstede mentioned above, with reversion to himself;¹⁰ but he never had actual possession of this as he died in 1438 and Joan lived on until 1448. At his death the Inquisition, held in 17 Hen. VI (1438-9), noted that his property consisted of Kyrtylynche manor, and divers lands and tenements in Ditton Camoys, Ditton Valoys, Silverle, Caxton and Assheley, all in Cambs; £20 rent in Winterslowe in Wilts;¹¹ one acre of land in Higham Benstede manor in

¹ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1429-36*, p. 251. *Cal. Close Rolls, 1429-35*, p. 200-1.

² *Cal. Close Rolls, 1429-35*, p. 201. ³ *Ibid.* John had died before 1429. ⁴ *Ibid.*, 1429-35, p. 266.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 215. ⁶ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1385-9*, p. 144. ⁷ *Rolls of Parliament, II*, 188, 194.

⁸ *Feudal Aids, I*, 177.

⁹ Copinger's *Manors of Suffolk* (V, 203) calls Ralph the eldest son; thus suggesting other issue.

¹⁰ *Cal. Close Rolls, 1429-35*, pp. 257, 258.

¹¹ He had assigned the Wyntreslowe rent to his mother Joan in lieu of dower, with reversion to his grandson John. (*Cal. Close Rolls, 1436-41*, p. 298.)

Walkinstowe, Higham Benstede manor, and Little Perndon manor and advowson, all in Essex; and Benington manor, and advowson, Herts. John, his grandson, son of his deceased son Ralph, was his heir.¹

Edmund's widow, Eleanor, survived until 1451. On 18 July 1446, Ralph Lord Cromwell was appointed as her kinsman² to keep all the lands of her grandson John which would come to him on her death, and also, all the lands and advowsons which would come to him on the death of Joan.³ Five years later, this grant having become ineffective, another was made, on 18 May 1451, to Ralph Lord Cromwell, king's chamberlain, of the wardship of the lands, as John was still a minor and both Eleanor and Joan were dead.⁴

Joan, at her death in 1448, was holding Benington manor and advowson, Higham Benstede manor in Walcomstowe and £20 rent in Wyntreslowe.⁵ She made her will on Monday before the Feast of St. Barnabas 1445.⁶ She desires to be buried in the chapel of St. Mary the Virgin of Benington Church; and leaves money to the high altar there. Legatees are (her brother) Philip Thornbury and his wife, Margery, William Bastard and his wife, Elizabeth,⁷ Henry Forster, John Auncell, Robert Parke, John Helyoo, Thomas Colceste, Richard Seceley, William Salman, Brother William Gedney of the Order of St. Augustine, Robert Malyns, and Leonard Stepulton, esq. The residue is left to the executors, Philip Thornbury, kt., Leonard Stepulton, esq., William Bastard, and John Tymmes, clerk.⁸ She also provides for prayers for her soul and those of her late husband, Sir Edward Benstede, and William Grenytt.

Attached to the will is a circular seal which bears the arms of Benstede impaling Thornbury; *Party per pale Or and Argent, a lion rampant Azure, over all two bends Gules*. Around the shield is the legend SIGILLUM JOHANNE BENSTED.

Ralph Benstede died in 1438, a few months before his father. By his wife Agnes he had two children, John the second born but only son, his heir, born in 1438, and Eleanor, who eventually inherited all the Benstede estates.

John Benstede, born in 1438,⁹ was, on 3 June 1459, pardoned for intruding into his inheritance without suit thereof.¹⁰ He was granted all its issues, and licensed to take possession without proof of age. It was recorded on 4 May 1459 that an Inquisition had, in error, found that Robert Benstede was kinsman and nearer heir of the late Edmund Benstede of all his lands in Cambs, namely son of Ralph, son of Edmund, but no such Robert is kinsman and heir but John is.¹¹ On 28 March 1460 he was pardoned for all offences and consequent forfeitures and losses, and all the possessions which had been taken into the king's hands on account of them were returned to him.¹² On 3 February 1461 he was appointed on a commission of Array for Herts, Cambs and Hunts, against the rebels.¹³

John Benstede was knighted, and married a lady named Margery. He alienated the family manor in Binsted, Hants, which he held, one half of the king, and the other of the Earl of Worcester as of Alton manor.¹⁴ In 1466 he and his wife Margery disposed of Little Parndon manor and advowson, as the following Feet of Fines records:

1466, Trinity term. Thomas Archbishop of Canterbury, William Ware clerk, Thomas Burgh kt., John Heton, William Cumberford, William Welden and William Forster, plaintiffs; John Benstede kt., and Margery his wife, deforciant. The manor of Little Perendon and the advowson of the church of Little Perendon. The deforciant quit claim of it from themselves and the

¹ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), IV, 189. The settlement of 1389 must have been varied later, for the Cambs. properties included here had been settled by it on Edward.

² Her brother-in-law Edward Benstede married Elizabeth, daughter of Ralph Lord Cromwell.

³ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1441-6*, p. 461. ⁴ *Ibid.*, 1446-52, p. 452. ⁵ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), IV, 189.

⁶ *P.R.O., Ancient Deeds*, E. 327.

⁷ Elizabeth was daughter of Nicholas Appleyard, by his wife Margaret, who was daughter and heir of Sir Philip and Margaret Thornbury. Her husband, William Bastard, died before 1475. (*V.C.H. Herts*, III.)

⁸ He died rector of Benington in 1466.

⁹ Recorded in the Woodhall Park deeds there is a John Benstede gent., who cannot be placed in the pedigree. In 1440 Edmund Bardolf enfeoffed him and his heirs of a cottage and two crofts called Brettes at Wemsted, Watton, Herts. In 1477-8 the said John Benstede enfeoffed William Crofton and others of the same. In 1457-8 he was a witness to a deed of feoffment of lands called Olivers at Wemsted Green. He may have belonged to the younger branch of the family.

¹⁰ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1452-61*, p. 487.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 569.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 497. This Robert may have been a natural son of Ralph.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 659.

¹⁴ *V.C.H. Hants*, II, 483-90.

heirs of John to the plaintiffs and the heir of Thomas Burgh with warranty for themselves and the heir of Margery against all men. Consideration, £300.¹

Sir John Benstede died in 1471, when his properties were recorded as the £20 rent from Winterslowe manor, Wilts; Benstede manor, a member of the honor of Alton, Hants;² Higham Benstede in Walkamstowe, Stanbrige manor of the honor of Clare and a member of the manor of Rawreth, all in Essex; the manors of Harpesfeld,³ Lye, Chewell, Herons in Cromerhyde, and Benington manor, all in Herts; Totenham manor as of the honor of Clare, Suffolk; and Kertling manor and lands and tenements in Ditton Camoys, Ditton Valence, Saxton and Cheveley, all in Cambs.

Dame Margery Benstede married secondly, as his second wife, William Bowley gent. of London. Bowley died in 1485. By his will⁴ made on 23 September of that year, he desired to be buried in the parish church of St. Sepulchre, London, "whereof I am parishioner that is to sey befor the highe auter," to which he gives 13s. 4d. Twelve torches and four tapers are "to be held in the handes of sixteen poor men" who are to be paid 4d. each. A priest is to be provided to sing for a year for the souls of his father and mother, brothers and sisters, John Danyele, Sir Thomas Chaworth kt., Thomas Holand esq., and Elizabeth his wife, and Maud, late my wife. He gives 40s. to Bridport parish church "wher I was born" to buy a banner. My daughter Elizabeth receives lands and tenements in Burgate in Bridport and also my place which William Dolby tanner has in Cowik parish, Devon. To William Benstede esq., "my son-in-law" who owes him £27 he grants a rebate of £7. Other legatees are Isabel Grene, Margaret Penky, William Constable and Morgan my servants, and Thomas Corffe. My daughter Elizabeth is to be married according to the advice of my executors, Richard Eggcombe and Roger Holand. The will was proved on 19 February 1485-6.

Dame Margery survived three years, and as Dame Margery Benstede late the wife of William Bowley gent., made her will on 2 January 1487-8.⁵ She desires to be buried in St. Sepulchre's Church, "that is to witt afore the Resurrection there as my husband William Bowley lieth." She leaves money to the high altar there and to the lights of St. Erasmus, St. Christopher and St. John the Baptist, and the Fraternity of Corpus Christi there, etc. The residue after providing for a month's mind is left to charity. The executor is Nicholas Barley; and the witnesses John Wode and William Newport. The will was proved on 9 November 1488, to Nicholas Barley.

Sir John and Dame Margery had an only son and heir, William, born in 1454, and so a minor at his father's death. In 1480 he granted Great Stambidge manor to William Pane, kt., William Paston, John Russhe and Thomas Lovell.⁶ He evidently fought on the Yorkist side against Henry VII, for he received a pardon "for all offences" in 1485.⁷ Before this he had sold the reversion of Benington manor, provided that he died without issue, to Edward IV; but when Henry came to the throne he conveyed it to trustees to uses unspecified in his Inquisition.⁸ He appears to have married a daughter of the aforesaid William Bowley, who, we may conclude, was dead before her father made his will, as she is not mentioned in it. William died without issue on the Sunday before Michaelmas, in 1485, aged 31,⁹ just after his father-in-law, having demised Higham Benstede manor to his mother for life, with reversion to himself and his heirs.¹⁰ The Inquisition¹¹ at his death reads as follows:

Writ, 8 January. *Inq.* 9 March, 1 Hen. VII. (1485-6.)

Margery late the wife of William Bowle was, at the time of the death of the said William Benstede, and still is, seised of the under mentioned manor of Heigham Benstede, under a demise thereof made to her by the said William for the term of her life, with reversion after her death to the said William and his heirs.

¹ My thanks are due to the Rev. G. Montagu Benton, F.S.A., and to Mr. S. C. Ratcliff of the Public Record Office, for facilities to examine those Feet of Fines for Essex which have not yet been printed.

² At the *Inq. p.m.* of William Benstede in 1486, it was stated that his father had alienated this manor "long before his death." See *V.C.H. Hants*, above.

³ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* (Folio), IV, 354. Clutterbuck (I, 110) states that Sir John unjustly disseised Edward (of the younger branch) of this manor. But it was certainly in the younger branch later.

⁴ P.C.C., 19 Logge. ⁵ *Ibid.*, 10 Milles. ⁶ *Cal. Ancient Deeds*, I, 86. (No. A726.)

⁷ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1476-85*, p. 543. ⁸ *Ibid.*, Herts, III, 75.

⁹ The king appointed him Constable of Hertford Castle on 22 September 1485. (W. F. Andrews, in *E.H.A.S. Transactions*, II, 187.) ¹⁰ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1485-94*, p. 254. ¹¹ *Cal. Inq. p.m., Hen. VII*, I, 27, 28.

He died without issue on the Sunday before Michaelmas last, seised of the under-mentioned manor of Stanbrigge and of the said reversion in fee. Ellen Benstede aged 50 or more is his aunt and next heir, viz. sister of John Benstede kt., his father.

ESSEX. The manor and advowson of Stanbrigge, worth 20 marks, held with the exception of 5 acres, of Cicely, Duchess of York, as of the honor of Clare by knight service.

Five acres of meadow in Stanbrigge, worth 8 shillings, held of William Doreward, as of the manor of Rawreth, by service of one penny yearly.

The reversion of the manor of Heigham Benstede in Walkamstowe, worth 10 marks, held with the exception of 5 acres, of the king in chief by service of $\frac{1}{2}$ k.f.

Four acres of meadow in Heigham Benstede, held of Thomas, abbot of Holy Cross, Waltham, by service of 5 shillings yearly. One acre of meadow in Heigham Benstede, held of the rector of Chyngeford in right of his church, by service of 1 penny yearly.

Writ, 8 January. *Inq.* Tuesday, 21 Feb., 1 Hen. VII.

HERTS. The manor of Benyngton, worth £30, held of the king in chief by service of $\frac{1}{3}$ k.f.

On William Benstede's death without issue his property came to his aunt Eleanor or Ellen, then aged 50 years.¹ But Edward Benstede of Hertingfordbury, a member of the younger branch of the family, and presumably the nearest male heir put in a claim to it; and so they went to law. Eleanor stated that the manors of Benington, Stanbridge, Tudenham, Cheveley and Bensted were entailed to her ancestors by deeds which were locked in a chest at the time of William's decease, and that immediately after his decease Edward took the deeds into his possession. Sir John Benstede, kt., had been seised in these manors as of fee and had issue, William, who died so seised. She, Ellen, is his cousin (i.e. aunt) and heir, and sister to the said Sir John Benstede. Joyce Dudley has also sued with Humfrey Stanley, kt., John Stoke, John Grene, William Burton and Richard Doughty.²

Joyce, daughter of Edmund Dudley, kt., deceased, states³ that, Humfrey Stanley, kt., John Stoke, John Grene, William Burton, and Richard Doughty were seised in their demesne as of fee in⁴ Stanbridge, Walkamstowe, Parndon, Benington, Leigh in Kimpton, Winterslowe, Harpesfield Hall, Symondshyde, Ditton Valines, Ditton Camois, Kyrtelyng, Cheveley and Tudenham, manors, to the use of Joyce and her heirs. These manors, with the exception of Stanbridge, William declared by his last will were to be given to her for life with remainder to Edward Benstede and his heirs. Stanbridge was to be sold for the payment of his debts. The trustees refused to surrender the property to the claimants and it all came to Eleanor. She forthwith conveyed Benington to Sir William Say;⁵ and in 1486 Edward Benstede released all his right in the manor to the same.⁶ But in 1488, Say, on account of William's sale of the reversion, had to obtain a pardon for acquiring it.⁷

In 1493 Eleanor disposed of Higham Benstede manor, one acre excepted, to John Rishe, gent., William Sutton, clerk, Thomas Wyndout and Richard Odyham, citizens of London.⁸ Thus ended the ownership of both Benington and Higham Benstede by the senior branch of the Benstede family.

How Tuddenham manor was dealt with is not stated, but it was in other hands in 1540.⁹

¹ Cussans, *Broadwater Hundred* (p. 127, footnote), gives him a daughter Margaret. If this is correct, Eleanor could not have been his heir: and all the property would have come to Margaret.

² *Early Chancery Proceedings*, bundle no. 33 (P.R.O.)

³ *Ibid.*, no. 124. No relationship of the disputants to each other is stated. The *V.C.H. Herts*, III, 416, suggests that William married Joyce and that they had a son Edward. This is not correct. It is more likely that they were betrothed, and that he made a will in her favour but died before the marriage; whereupon Edward married her.

⁴ Eleanor Benstede had enfeoffed them for ever. (*Cal. Patent Rolls, 1485-94*, p. 254.)

⁵ *Cal. Ancient Deeds*, I, 248. (No. B356.) ⁶ P.R.O., *Ancient Deeds*, A 4673. ⁷ Pat. 4 Hen. VII, m. 7.

⁸ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1485-94*, p. 465. ⁹ Copinger, *Manors of Suffolk*, IV, 203.

THE BENSTEDE FAMILY; THE YOUNGER BRANCH

THE younger branch of the Benstede family commenced with Sir Edward, the second surviving son of Sir Edward (d. 1432), and brother of Sir Edmund (d. 1438). By the settlement of 1389,¹ having issue, he would have inherited all the family estates except Benington and Higham Benstede; but that settlement was evidently varied later so that he inherited only Harpesfield manor in St. Peter's and Leigh manor in Kimpton.² He married Elizabeth, daughter of Ralph, Lord Cromwell, and widow of Sir John Clifton (d. at Rhodes, 1388), of Buckenham Castle, Norfolk.³ Elizabeth died in 1393-4. Sir Edward apparently married secondly Joan *née* Edmonds, widow of William Greville, of the Edmonds family of Deddington, Oxon.⁴

Sir Edward died in 1431. His son and heir, Edward, was aged 9 or more in 1433,⁵ and so was born about 1423. It is said that he was unlawfully disseised of Harpesfield Hall manor by Sir John Benstede of the senior branch,⁶ but however that may have been, Harpesfield Hall and Leigh manors are found later held at his death by Sir Edward Benstede (d. 1518), Edward's direct descendant.⁷

Owing to a succession of Edwards in this branch of the family, the pedigree cannot be stated with certainty at this point; but it seems likely, and certainly fits in chronologically, that this last Edward may have been the Edward Benstede, knight, Master of the Game, whose (younger) son John, born in 1455, entered St. Alban's Abbey as a novice in 1470.⁸ If so we are again on firm ground, for the will of Sir Edward (d. 1518) shows the testator to have been his son and brother of John. From the same source we learn that the father and mother were buried at St. Peter's, and hence would be residing at Harpesfield.⁹

This last Sir Edward Benstede, who died in 1518, had a distinguished career. He married Joyce, third and youngest daughter of Sir Edmund Sutton *alias* Dudley,¹⁰ and so acquired for the Benstede shield the quarterings of Dudley, Sutton, Tiptoft and Powis. In 1485 Edward and Joyce were the claimants to Benington manor, etc., on the death of William Benstede without issue; Edward claiming it as the nearest male heir; and Joyce as legatee under William's will. In the same year he and Philip Biterley or Botirely were appointed by the king to the office of the "oter huntres" in survivorship with allowances of 3½*d.* a day each, 4½*d.* a day for dogs' food, 1½*d.* a day for a groom, and 9*d.* a day for housing twelve dogs.¹¹ On 22 September 1485 the king gave him the custody of the parks of Hertford and Hertingfordbury.¹² In 1489, 1492, 1503 and 1514, he was appointed on commissions of gaol delivery of St. Albans gaol;¹³ and on 26 August 1492 on one to purvey horses and carters for the carriage of the king's ordnance in Herts.¹⁴ He was on the commission of the peace for Herts in 1497, 1500, 1501, 1503, 1506, 1509, 1510, 1511, and 1512.¹⁵ From the moment that Henry VIII became king he led a very busy life. He was one of the gentlemen ushers present at the burial of Henry VII¹⁶ and one of the gentlemen ushers of the Queen's Chamber at the coronation of Henry VIII, in 1509.¹⁷ Three years later the king made war on France. This led, as usual, to an attack on England by the King of Scotland, James IV. In this Scottish war,

¹ See p. 33. ² See p. 35. ³ Cokayne, *Complete Peerage*, Clifton.

⁴ A shield of arms similar to that of Edmonds, being a Benstede quartering, appears on the tomb of Sir John Bocket, in Wheathamstead Church, Herts. The Edmonds arms are *Or, on a chevron Azure between 3 griffins heads erased Gules 3 estoiles Or*. The Benstede quartering has 4 estoiles. See p. 34.

⁵ *Cal. Close Rolls, 1429-35*, p. 266.

⁶ See p. 37, footnote.

⁷ See p. 43.

⁸ See p. 44.

⁹ See p. 41.

¹⁰ Joyce's aunt Joan, sister and coheir of John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, and wife of Edmund Ingoldesthorpe, left her 40*s.* rent a year for life out of Wickhambreux manor, Kent, in 1490. (*Cal. Inq. p.m., Hen. VII*, I, 463-6.)

¹¹ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1485-94*, p. 23; *Rolls of Parliament*, VI, 356.

¹² W. F. Andrews in *E.H.A.S. Transactions*, II, 186. *Chronica Monasterii S. Albani, Registra J. Whethamstede*, II, pp. xlvi, xlix, wrongly attributes the ottership and park-keepership to his father. See *Rolls of Parliament*, VI, 376.

¹³ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1485-94*; and *Letters and Papers, Hen. VIII*, I, p. 738.

¹⁴ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1485-94*, p. 404.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 643; and *Letters and Papers, Hen. VIII* (2 ed.), I, p. 1538.

¹⁶ *Cal. Letters and Papers, Hen. VIII* (2 ed.), I, p. 11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Edward Benstede was treasurer in the king's army in the north.¹ The war ended by the defeat of the Scots at the Battle of Flodden Field by the Earl of Surrey. The first attack on France in 1512 was a failure, but in 1513 the king himself landed at Calais, and with the Emperor Maximilian defeated the French at Guinegate, known as the Battle of the Spurs. By the end of the autumn Terouenne and Tournai had been taken, but forsaken by his allies, Henry found that he was unable single-handed to conquer France. He therefore came to terms with its king, Louis XII who, though an elderly widower, wanted a young wife. Henry accordingly gave him his younger sister, the Princess Mary, in marriage. Edward Benstede accompanied the princess to Tournai on 23 September 1514 for the wedding,² and was knighted there by Henry two days later.³ He remained at Tournai in an official capacity, being treasurer of the Council there, until on 21 April 1516, Sir Richard Jerningham succeeded him in that post.⁴ In 1515 he is officially called Treasurer of War in the suite of Thomas Duke of Norfolk and late Treasurer to Mary, Queen of France.⁵

In a letter to Wolsey on 16 May 1516, William Blount, Lord Mountjoy, Lieutenant of Tournai, recommends Benstede as one "who has done good service during his abode here."⁶

Following his retirement Edward Benstede was on royal business at York, when, on 16 June 1517, Magnus, Archdeacon of the East Riding of Yorkshire and king's chaplain, sent him with a letter to Cardinal Wolsey, in which he dubs him as one "who is a right sad, wise and worshipful man, who hath diligently done his service to the Queen (of Scots), as her chamberlain."⁷

On 7 November 1518 Edward Benstede was appointed sheriff of Herts and Essex, but did not live to fill that post for long; he was dead by the end of the year.⁸

The acquisition of various properties in Herts by Sir Edward Benstede is recorded by Feet of Fines of the period. The first dealt with Hall's Place in the parish of St. Peter, St. Albans. It was executed in Michaelmas term, 1489;⁹ and reads:

Edward Benstede esq., plaintiff; William Westby esq., deforciant. A messuage and lands in Bougate in St. Peter's parish, Sandridge, and Parksoken, which John Forster, John Sturgeon, and John Felde esq. and Thomas Holbeche gent. by deed confirmed to the said William Westby for life with remainder to Johanna wife of Thomas Hoo of Walden Abbots, co. Hertford, late the wife of Robert Westby, with further remainder to Margaret daughter of the said Robert Westby and Johanna.

Hall's Place, in Bowgate, St. Albans, opposite the Pemberton Almshouses, probably derived its name from ownership by the Hall or Athall family. Edmund Westby acquired it by marriage with the Athall heiress; and is said to have afforded shelter to the wounded King Henry VI there for the night after the first Battle of St. Albans in 1455.¹⁰ Edmund Westby died in 1475, and, as the Feet of Fines records, William Westby sold it to Edward Benstede in 1489.

In Trinity term, 1502,¹¹ Edward Benstede was associated with Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, Bartholomew Westby, second baron of the Exchequer, William Meryng, kt., Thomas Pykeryng, esq., and Robert Rowenyng, clerk,¹² as plaintiffs; with William Bottesford and his wife Ellen as deforciant; concerning a messuage and lands in Bowgate, St. Peter's parish, Sandridge and Parksoken.¹³

In 1504 Sir Edward Benstede and Thomas Dudley presented, for this turn only, George Dudley¹⁴ to Hertingfordbury Church.

¹ *Cal. Letters and Papers, Hen. VIII* (2 ed.), I, p. 666.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1387.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1556.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 52, 53, 104, 147, 263, 318, 389, 499, 511.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1534.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1076.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1376.

⁹ *Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, I, 2.

¹⁰ Stowe.

¹¹ *Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, I, 7.

¹² Robert Rowenyng had been instituted rector of Essendon, Herts, in 1490.

¹³ The mediæval Soken of Park of St. Albans Abbey lay to the south-east of the town, and extended into Aldenham, Barnet, St. Stephens, St. Peters, Elstree, Ridge and Northaw parishes. Its centre was Tyttenhanger.

¹⁴ In Hilary term, 1506-7, Richard Lawrence, Edmund Dudley esq., and others were plaintiffs and Thomas Wall, Robery Egerley and others, deforciant, to a Feet of Fines, concerning a messuage, and lands in Hertford and Amwell, Herts. (*Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, I, 9.)

In Michaelmas term, 1507,¹ Sir Edward Benstede acquired FitzJohn's Farm, Hertingfordbury. The Feet of Fines reads:

Edward Benstede and his wife Joyce, Robert Rownyng, rector of Esynden, William Heydon gent., John Parrowe gent., William Southwodde merchant, Richard Downyns and John Balthorp, plaintiffs; William Bedwell and Agnes FitzJohn, one of the sisters and heirs of Robert FitzJohn deceased. A moiety of a messuage, lands and rents in Hertingfordbury.

Sir Edward Benstede made his will on 26 December 1517. It is a long document but full of important details.² It reads:

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN I Sir Edwarde Bensted late of Hertfordingbury within the countie of Hertford knyght beyng in good helthe and right mynde our lorde god be thanked make this my present testament and last will in maner and forme as hereafter ensuyth First I bequeth my soule to almyghty god and my Saviour and maker our blessed Lady seint mary his moder and to all the holy company of heven And my body to be buried in the Quere within the parisshe Church of hertfordingbury aforesaide before the Image of our blessed Ladye of Acon³ there besyde my childern Also I bequethe to the parsons of the Church for my prevy tythes forgotten behynde with other my offrynges during the season that I haue contynued in the said parishe xiijs. iiij*d*. And to the wardeins of the said church towards the reparacions of the same xs. Also I will that incontentent vpon my dethe myne Executours cause to doo make a windowe through the wall on the Southsyde of the Church aforesaid And doo glase the same with the Images of Seint Albone and seint Amphiabill setting twoo scochins ther on with myn Armys an other with my wife Dame Joyce in remembrance of vs bothe with oure childern that ben entred there And that my taper byrnnynge before oure Lady of Acon may be kept and mayntained as long as they maye be of power. Also I bequeth vnto the parisshe Church of sent petirs within the Towne of Seint Albones A Chales of Siluer and gilt to the value of iiij*li*. sterling there to Remayne to the seruice of god his blessed mother mary and that holy appostell seint petir to thentent that the soules of my father and of my mother myne & my said wife with other my kynsfolkes that ben entred there⁴ may be the better remembred herafter in the prayers of the holy Church Also I bequethe vnto the monastery of Seint Albones aforesaid to be prayde fore there and to haue a speciall dirige and masse for my soule xvjs. viij*d*. And besyde that to the covent of the same for a pytannce iijs. iiij*d*. Also I bequethe vnto the house and priory of our blessid Lady of herford⁵ for to haue a dirige and masse doon for my soule there xxs. And to the church of Alhalowes⁶ there xxd. Also to the church of seint Andrewe xxd. Also to the Freres at Ware⁷ to haue a trentall of masses doon for my soule xs. Also I bequethe to the church of Bisshopps hatfeld xxd. and to my seruant Thomas plomer my blak horsse sadell and bridell my blak chamlett gowne furred with blacke lambe and bogie and xiijs. iiij*d*. in money And he to haue apaire of my best hosen Also I bequethe vnto John Cowper of seint albons xs. in money towards a gown Also I bequethe to my cosyn Alis Ferrers⁸ iiij kyne and tenne shepe a standyng cupp with a couer of silver and vj silver spones a fetherbed with all the imployments and necessities that belonghithe

¹ *Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, I, 10.

² P.C.C. 25 Ayloff. This is copied direct from the will, the copy of the same, printed in the *Transactions of the East Herts Archaeological Society*, Vol. II, pp. 189-94, and the notes upon it, being inaccurate in some places. The abbreviations are extended.

³ St. Mary of Acon, or Acre, was one of the designations of the Blessed Virgin. The Crusaders had a special shrine to her at Accho or St. Jean d'Acre, and brought back with them the memory of their veneration. In London there were the churches of St. Nicholas Acons (now united with St. Edmund the Martyr), in Lombard Street, and of the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acon afterwards the Mercers' Chapel, in Cheapside.

⁴ From the fact that his father and mother were buried at St. Peter's Church, it may be concluded that they lived at Harpesfield Hall.

⁵ The Benedictine Priory of St. Mary the Great, Hertford, was a cell of St. Albans Abbey.

⁶ All Saints Church.

⁷ The Franciscan Friary (Fratres Minores) at Ware. The building is now mistakenly called The Priory.

⁸ See below, p. 45.

to a hoole bed after the honest maner Also I bequethe vnto Gilbert adams after the dethe of my wif the tenement and the housse that his father nowe dwellith in beyng in the parsones holde And I will that my said wif make a surrender thereof to his vse in the tyme of his lyfe Also I will that my said wif or myne Executours delyuer and paye vnto the priour and convent of the house of blacke monkes of oure blessed lady of Herforde in recompence of such money and goodes as my broder Damp John Bensted¹ founde thereat his first comyng which she may well paye of such goodes as she hathe of his xij*li*. Also I woll that my said wif or my said Executours incontenent vpon my said dethe delyuer and paye vnto the abbot and convent of the monasterij of Seint petir and seint Ilde of Whytbye² towards the reparacon the churche there x*li*. sterling Also I woll that my said wif and Executours furthwith vpon my dethe delyuer and paye vnto the priour and convent of the house of Seint Oswyne of Tynmowthe³ towarde the reparacon there iiij*li*. sterling Also I will that my said wif or my executours aforesaid furthwith vpon my dethe delyuer and truely paye vnto a peauter of London dwelling besids seint Antoniys there for a garnysse of counterfett peauter vessells with a basyn and an ewer of peauter in lyke wise which my brother Damp John Bensted late Abbot of Whytby toke of hymm yeris past xxxiijs. iiij*d*. And also that my said wif or my said executours furthwith vpon my dethe delyuer and paye vnto the priour and brethren of the house of seint Joannes Jerusalem within the Realme of England⁴ to pray for the soule of William Grene late of Boston marchaunt as money lent vnto the said William Throwez otherwise called William Porter xxvjs. viij*d*. The Residue of all my goodes and catalls not bequethed my will in euery thing fulfilled and my detts truely paid I gyve and grante hooly vnto Joyes my wif which Joyes with Thomas Warton oon of the three Clerks of the kyngs Exchequer I doo make and ordeyn myn Executours of this my present and last will to thentent that for the greate and speciall trust I haue in them they will diligently and truely performe the same for the weale of my soule and also of theires And I will that the said Thomas Warton have for his labour xxs. And I will that in any wise this my last will be stedfast and stande in effecte and full strength And I haue required and assigned maister Damp John kenelworth Solerer of that noble monastery of seint Albones to be overseer and supervisour of this my present testament and last will he to haue for his labour my grey Scottishe nagge Thise ben the very wytnesses of this my very will John Draper John Forster John Bygge William ffounde Edward Forster and John Elart with other made and wryten with the proper hande of me the said Edward Bensted the xxvj day of Decembre the yere if our lord god m^cxvij and the ixth yere of the Reigne of our soueraine Lord Kyng Henry the Eyght.

MORE OVER as tochyng my landes I will in any wise that my said wif Joyse haue enjoye and possesse all and euery such landes and tenements rents and seruices as I haue or euer had within the countie of hartforde hamshire and Norff or in any other place within this Realme of England for terme of hir lyf according to suche astates and suretie as I haue lately made and gyven vnto hir in that behalf with all and euery suche landes and tenements rents and seruices as she and I haue lately purchased togeder aswell fre as copy in the lordshipp of hartfording bury and in the parisshe of seint Andrewes of the towne of hertford within the countie of hertford as quietly and peassably as euer I occupied them my self Further more I woll that at all suche seasons after my dethe and as my said wif shalbe disposed to sell and make sale of my maner of Ikboroughe⁵ and thappurtennces within the countie of Norfolke that then all such feoffees as stonde enfeofed to my vse within the same shall make asure and asufficient astate in the lawe of the said maner of Ikboroughe with thappurtennces to my said wif and my said Executour to thentent that

¹ For John Benstede, see below, p. 44. ² The Abbey of St. Hilda at Whitby, Yorks.

³ Tynemouth Priory, Northumberland, a cell of St. Albans Abbey.

⁴ The priory of St. John of Jerusalem, at Clerkenwell, the headquarters of the Knights Hospitallers in England.

⁵ Edward Benstede had probably acquired Ickborough from Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, who had bought it in 1478. Benstede presented to the church there in 1518. He was associated with the bishop in 1502, concerning property at St. Albans. See p. 40.

they make sale of the same Sothat the money comyng therof may be employed aboute such meritorie deds as I haue gyven in charge to my said wif and Executour to doo and fulfill for the weale of my soule and hers Also I woll that at suche season hereafter as my said wife shalbe disposed to make sale of the ferme called FitzJohns and the appurtennces with all such other landes and tenements rentis and seruices as I and she lately haue bought and purchased to geder within the lord shipp of hartfordingbury and in the parishe of seint Andrewes within the countie of hertford aforesaid that then such my feoffees as of speciall trust stonde and bene enfeofed in the landes aforesaid shall make vnto my said wif Joyse with myne other Executour a suer and asufficient astate in the lawe of all and euery of the said landes and tenements rents and seruices lying within the lordshipp of Hertfordingbury and parisshe of hertford called seint Andrewes aforesaid to thentent that with the money comyng of the same they may dispose according to my mynde shewed lately to my said wif and then for the weale of my soule and hers Excepte my tenement and ferme with thappurtennces called Wolmers lying within the said Lordshipp of Hartfordingbury which I woll that after the disceace of my said wif shall discende to my Cosen Ales Ferrers And that my said feoffes make asure & a sufficient astate in the lawe of the same to her vse and behoff according to this my last will Also I bequethe vnto my said Cosen Alis after the dethe of my said wif my tenement with the appurtennces lying in the Thorpe of hartfordingbury in the which Fraunces the miller nowe dwellith in She to haue the same with the premisses to her and to hir heires for euer. And I woll that my said wif do make in hir lyves tymes a surrender of the said tenement with thappurtennces accordyng to this my graunt and last will Also I woll that at all suche season after my dethe as my said wif Joyse shall desire my feoffees suche as ben feoffed in my maner of Bested otherwise Bolongars within the countie of hamshire to my vse and behoff shall furthwith make asure and asufficient astate in the lawe of the same maner with thappurtennces to my said wif Joys and myn other Executour thentent they may dispose and distribute the money that they shall make of the landes for the weale of my soule the soules of William Bensted late of Benyngton and hir soule And to paye suche parte of detts as he aught at the houre of his dethe accordyng to her discrecion and conscience which hath priked my conscience right afore And so I doute not but it dothe hers Also I will in any wise that my ferme and maner called halles with thappurtennces in the parissches of Saint petirs and Sandryge And the Soken of parke besyde the towne of Seint Albones after the decease of my said wif Joyse shall decende and goo to my cosen Alis Ferrers aforesaid and to her heires for euer And that suche my feoffes as stonde enfeofed in the same make hir a sure and a sufficient astate in thlawe accordyng to this my mynde withoute coloure or delaye And if my said cosyn alis dye withoute Issue of hir bodye lawfully begoten that then the said ferme and maner of halles with the appurtennces shall Remayne to her oldest brother and my cosyn John Ferrers and to his heires fore ever and so from heire to heire aslong as any of that blode endurithe and Ovir that I will that after the dethe of my said wif Joyse my maner of harpiffeldhall lying in the parishe of seint petirs beside the towne of Seint Albones the maner of lyghe and kynepton with their appurtennces. And all such landes and tenements rents and seruices as I had within the towne and lordshipp of Benyngton within the countie of herford aforesaid which descended to me by right of Enheritance shall goo and retorne to my said cosyn John Ferrers as sonne and next heire vnto my suster Katern Ferrers late of the towne of Seint Albones aforesaid whose soule Jhu pardone To haue enjoye and hold the same to hym and to his heires for evir of the chief lordes of the fee by the rent due and accustomed And if there be any poynte or clause in this my last will that is not made formeable after the true course of the lawe I woll then that myne Executours shall correcte the same and cause it to be made in goode forme not changyng the mater in any condicion but that it may stonde in effecte in euery poynte as I haue here entended and the same for the more suertie I haue wryten the premisses with myne owne hande Also I woll that after the deceas of my said wif Joys my seruint Thomas Plomer haue and enjoye my tenement sett in the Thropp of hartfordingbury in the which William ffounde now dwellithe And before hym John Sherr he to haue the same to hym and to his heires for ever And that my said feoffes make him a sure and sufficient astate in the lawe of the said tenement accordyng to this my mynde Also I bequethe vnto the church of our blessid Ladye of hartfordingbury my

gown of blacke lukes velvet furred with Jenetts for to make a goodly Coope an Awbe with the apparell therunto belongyng and a Chesible for to saye masse in with the value of the said gowne And if it will not extende thereunto then I woll that my said Executours shall do paye and performe the rest of the same. And I bequethe vnto the parisshe church of seint petir within the Towne of seint Albones my Cote of Cremesyne velvett browdered with clothe of gold And in lyke wise my jaked of black veluet gardyd with clothe of gold to make a vestament there in honour of god and sent pitir in remembrance that my father and mother withe other my kynsfolke ben entred and buried there Also I woll that after the dethe of my said wif Joys my said cosyn alis Ferrers haue my cupp with the cover siluer and gilt called the Rosse Cupp and twoo of my pounced gobletts of siluer Also I will that my cosyn Dorathe Loyde haue after the dethe of my said wif oon of my chased paces of siluer Also I woll that my serunt Thomas Barber haue my cote of tawny Veluet Also I bequeth to euery godd sonne that I haue vjs. viij*d*. Also I woll that a stone be provided and oredeyned incontenent vpon my dethe for me and my said wif Joys to be layde vpon my grave with all hast & diligence of the value of v or vj pounce sterling havyng the armes and scochyns of vs bothe to thentent that our lovers and frends may haue remembrance of vs hereafter Also I will that William Kelam haue ijs. iiij*d*. in money an old doblet of myn and an old paire of hosen Also I woll that my ladde David haue ijs. iiij*d*. and an other old doblet withe a paire of hosen. Also I bequethe to the lytill boye of the kechyn xxd. in money for a shirte and my tawny velvet doblet whose name is called pope Also I bequeth to my serunt William Burton my blacke horsse goyng in the parke and ijs. iiij*d*. in money Also I bequethe to thouse of observunts in Grenewiche and Richmount vjs. viij*d*. Moreouer I will that my said wif and my said executour fynde an honest prest to syng at harfordingbur for my soule William Benstead late of Benyngton and hers by the space of vij yeres if it be possible that they may make such money of such of my landes and goodes as they shall sell to the performyng of this my mynde and last Will Also I will that William Coke haue iij ewe Sheepe and ijs. iiij*d*. in Siluer.

Proved 13th February 1519.

This will contains many interesting points. First of all, regarding Sir Edward's relatives. He and Joyce had had children who had all died young and been buried in Hertingfordbury Church. His father mother and kinsfolk, unfortunately nameless, lay in St. Peter's Church, St. Albans. William Benstede¹ of Benington was probably either the one recorded above as the last male member of the senior branch, on whose death in 1485 Sir Edward had unsuccessfully claimed the property, or more probably a deceased brother. Then we have his sister Katherine Ferrers and her children Alice and John, his brother Dom. John Benstede, and his "cousin" Dorothy Lyde.

The will does not seem to reflect very great credit on Dom. John Benstede, but perhaps in those days it was considered that, whatever anyone else might do, ecclesiastics could do no wrong. He appears to have impoverished Hertford Priory and to have acquired from a London pewterer some plate without paying for it.

John Benstede entered St. Albans Monastery as a novice on 11 July 1470. The Register of the Abbot William Albon records him as John Benstede, gentleman, son of Edward Benstede, knight, Master of the Game.² He was then fifteen years old, and so born in 1455, and godson of John Newbury, kt., Abbot Wallingford's secretary. He appears in the list of St. Albans's monks in 1476³ and four years later he had advanced to be the abbot's chaplain.⁴ In 1483 he was elected Prior of Hertford Priory⁵ and held that post for thirteen years. In 1496 he became Prior of Tynemouth Priory.⁶ In 1505 he was advanced to be Abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of SS. Peter and Hilda at Whitby,⁷ where he remained until his death in 1514.⁸

¹ William Benstede was one of the executors of the will of John Boteler of Watton Woodhall, Herts, made in 1513. (P.C.C. 8 Holder.) He was a "cousin" of the testator.

² Chronicles and Memorials Series. *Chronica Monasterii S. Albani*. Registra Johannis Whethamstede, etc., II, 90.

³ *Registrum Johannis Whethamstede*, II, 146. ⁴ *Ibid.*, 231. ⁵ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, III, 298.

⁶ Hodgson, *History of Northumberland*, VIII, 123. ⁷ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1494-1509*, p. 431.

⁸ *Letters and Papers, Hen. VIII*, I, 732.

As regards the Ferrers family; Sir Edward's deceased sister Katherine had married John Ferrers of St. Albans, and is named in the pedigree of the Ferrers family which is recorded in the *Visitation of Herts*;¹ but her eldest son John and her daughter Alice are not included there.

Of the property mentioned in Sir Edward's will, Ickborough, FitzJohns, and Benstead Bolongars were to be sold. Joyce was to retain the rest for life, and thereafter Wolmers was left to niece Alice Ferrers. Halls and the Soken of Park were left also to niece Alice, but if she died without issue they went to her brother John. After Joyce's death Harpesfield Hall, Leigh in Kimpton and Benington property were to go direct to John.

This is the first record that we have of Wolmers, now Wolmers Park, as a distinct property by that name. It lies in Hertingfordbury parish, about three miles south-west of Hertford. The mention of Benington, Herts, and of Benstead Bolongars, Hants, shows that the Benstedes still retained some property in those places, although the main manors had left the family by alienation. Bensted Bolongars cannot be identified, but it is suggested that it was the "Billingshurst Farm" of c. 1600.²

The instructions which Sir Edward Benstede left in his will regarding the alterations in Hertingfordbury Church and his tomb there were evidently carried into effect. The window which he ordered should be made was probably the one which is still in the south wall of the nave close to the pulpit; but its stained glass has long since disappeared. His memorial, too, has long since gone; neither Chauncy in 1700, Salmon in 1728, nor Clutterbuck in 1815 have recorded it. The only evidence of its existence is an old rubbing in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries. This shows four shields of arms. The first is Benstede; *Gules three bars gemelles Or*. The other three are all Dudley. One bears Quarterly 1 and 4, Dudley; *Or two lions passant Azure*; 2 and 3, Hotoft as borne by the Sutton family, Barons Dudley, *Azure a cross moline or fleury Or*; impaling Tiptoft, *Argent a saltire engrailed Gules*, impaling Powis, *Or a lion rampant Gules*. Another bears Dudley quartering Hotoft and impaling Tiptoft impaling Powis, quartering Badlesmere, *Argent a fess between two bars gemelles Gules*. The other shield bears the same as the last, but the two quarterings of Tiptoft and Powis are reversed.³

After Sir Edward Benstede's death in 1518, his widow Joyce married William Purdee.⁴ In accordance with the will of Sir Edward Benstede they disposed, in 1526-7, of Ickborough manor, to John Crofts of West Stow, Suffolk.⁵ In 1527 they sold a manor in Binsted, Hants, to William Lokke.⁶ This manor, presumably the Benstede Bolongars of Sir Edward's will, is perhaps identical with the "Billingshurst Farm" which a Rental of Alton, c. 1600, records as being rented by John Locke.⁷ In 1535 William Purdee, senior, sold a tenement in Hertingfordbury in St. Andrew's parish, Hertford, to John Boteler.⁸ The Benington property was dealt with in 1538, when William Ferrers, clerk, parted with three messuages, lands and rent there which William Purdee and Joyce his wife hold for the life of the said Joyce, of the inheritance of the said William.⁹ Three years later John Boteler disposed of the same to Thomas Kent, with Joyce, now a widow, still holding it. The sale of FitzJohns Farm is not recorded.¹⁰

Joyce was a widow for the second time by 1541. A William Purdee, apparently her son, made his will on 14 August 1557.¹¹ He is described as of Hertingfordbury, esq., and desires to be buried in the chancel of that church. He leaves all his lands, goods, etc., for life to his wife Elizabeth, his sole executor, with remainder to their son John and his heirs; but if John dies childless then they are to be shared equally by their three daughters, Thomasyn, Margery and Elizabeth. My brother, the parson of Hertingfordbury¹²

¹ *Harl. Soc. Publication*, XXII, 141-2. ² *V.C.H. Hants*, II, 486; and p. 43.

³ The Dudley, Sutton, Tiptoft and Powis arms appear on the tomb of William and Constance Dudley in Himley Church, Staffs. They were the children of Sir Edmund Dudley by Joyce Tiptoft, and nephew and niece to Joyce Benstede. (*Herald and Genealogist*, II, 495.)

⁴ He may have been the son of William Purdee senior, who made his will on 18 July 1539 (P.C.C. 25 Dyngley). He desires to be buried at St. Botolph's Church next Aldersgate, London. The executors are sons William and Arthur, clerk. The supervisors are John Mynne gent, and Roger Taylor of London, goldfiner. The will, which was proved on 21 August 1539, contains no details concerning Herts.

⁵ *Feet of Fines*, Michaelmas term, 18 Hen. VIII, no. 113. In 1526 William and Joyce Purdee presented to Ickborough Church. (Blomfield, *History of Norfolk*, II, 234-5.)

⁶ *Feet of Fines*, Hants, Michaelmas term, 18 Hen. VIII. (*V.C.H. Hants*, II, 486.) ⁷ Add MS. 27893. (*Ibid.*)

⁸ *Feet of Fines*, Trinity term, 1535. (*Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, I, 144.)

⁹ *Ibid.*, Easter term, 1538. (*Ibid.*, I, 147.)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1541. (*Ibid.*, I, 151.)

¹¹ P.C.C. 14 Noodes.

¹² He does not appear in Cussans' list of the rectors of Hertingfordbury; there being a blank from 1504 to 1629.

is appointed overseer; and the witnesses are William Kypton and Robert Hawkyns. The will was proved on 7 April 1558.

Another member of the younger branch of the Benstede family was Margaret, daughter of William Bensted, who married Sir John Brocket of Brocket Hall, Hatfield, Herts. But her father cannot be identified. We can only surmise that he may have been a deceased brother of Sir Edward Benstede, and unmentioned in his will. The epitaph on Sir John Brocket's altar tomb in Wheathamstead Church, Herts, has this inscription:

Here lyeth the bodyes of John Broket knight and Dame Margaret his wyffe dowghter and
ayre of Wylliam benstede esquier which departyd this worlde ye xxiiij of marche in ye yere of
our lorde god MDlvij and ye sade dame Margaret departede this worlde ye day of ye
yere of owere lorde god MD whych S. john and dame Margaret had yssue x sonnes and
three dowghteris.

The centre shield on the west end of this tomb bears the arms of Brocket impaling Benstede. This Benstede impalement shows Quarterly, 1 and 4 Benstede; 2, Cromwell, *Argent, a chief Gules and a bend Azure*; ¹ 3, possibly Edmonds, *Or on a chevron between 3 griffins heads erased Vert four estoiles of the field*.² Sir John Brocket died in 1558.

Sir John and Margaret Brocket had acquired Harpesfield Hall and Leigh in Kimpton manors from Francis Ferrers in 1547;³ and also, before 1555, Chewells and Herons manor, for in that year, a deed of settlement of those manors on them was completed.⁴

¹ The presence of the Cromwell arms proves that Margaret belonged to the younger branch of the Benstede family.

² The Edmonds arms have usually three estoiles on the chevron.

³ *Feet of Fines, Herts*. Trinity term, 1547. (*Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, I, 199.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, Easter term 1555. (*Ibid.*, p. 245.)

EPILOGUE

IN preparing this account of the Benstede family it would be surprising if other Benstedes who cannot be linked up with them had not been encountered, particularly in Hants. In the days before the end of the fourteenth century when surnames were unknown, a man was very frequently distinguished from his fellows by the addition of the name of his native place to his own name. Hence many a native of Binstead, unconnected with the family whose history is traced in the foregoing pages, may have borne the name of Benstede. As early as 1270 a certain Philip de Bensted and his wife Imania granted land in the tithing of Hipley in Boarhunt, Hants, to Southwick Priory. In the fifteenth century Thomas Benstede was the thirteenth abbot of Titchfield, Hants. There was a Gregory Benstede of Hants in 1574 and 1575.

The will of John Benstede of Binfield, yeoman (made 19 December 1613; proved 2 December 1614), is amongst Sussex wills.¹ He may have derived his name from Binsted in Sussex.

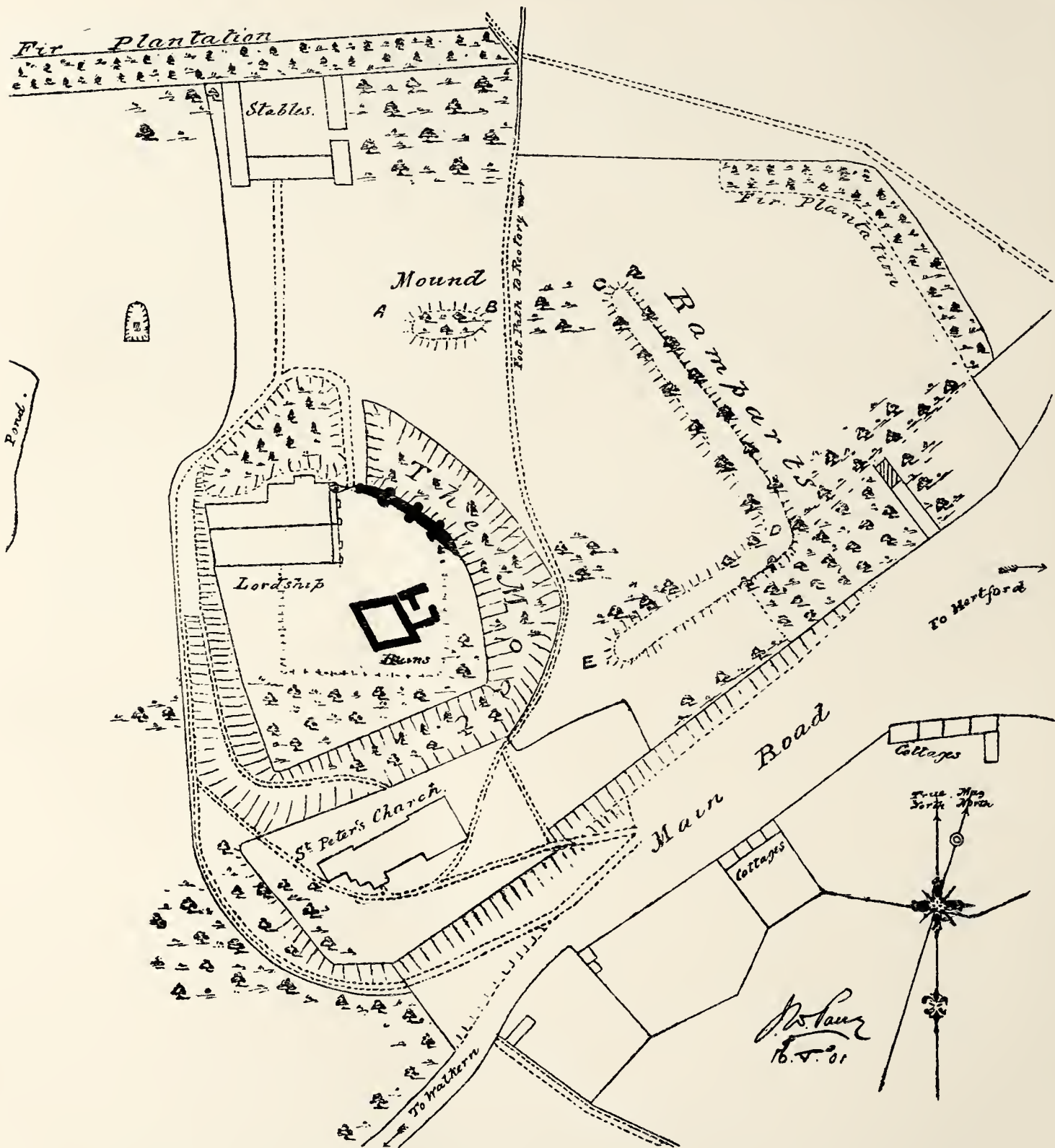
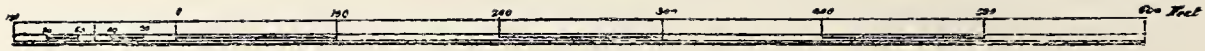
In Norfolk, in 1335, Well Hall manor in Beechamwell, was held by Richard de Walkfar and John de Benstede.² The latter presented to the church there as lord of the manor in 1349. John de Benstede is met with in 1347, and Maud de Benstede in 1350.³

In Kent Benstedes are more numerous. Benstede manor in Hunton was held by John de Benstede of Sittingbourne in the reign of Henry III. The will of Eleanor Benstede, widow, of Herne, 1529, is in the Probate Registry at Canterbury. In the Maidstone parish registers are recorded the marriages of John Benstede with Agnes Bromfylde on 1 June 1553; and of John Edward with Agnes Benstede on 28 January, the same year. An Andrew Benstede was rector of Stonor in 1486 and vicar of Herne from 1511 until his death in 1531. In this last case it is possible to suggest, if Andrew was a member of the Herts family, how he came to obtain the living. Sir Edward Benstede's wife Joyce, *née* Dudley, as mentioned above, was niece of Joan, sister and coheir of John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, and wife of Sir Edmund Inglethorpe of Wickhambreux, Kent. Joan was also related to the Stonor family as her *Inq. p.m.*, dealing with her Cambridgeshire estates reveals. It was perhaps Joyce's influence, exerted on the Abbot of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, the patron of Stonor Church, through her aunt, which obtained the rectory of Stonor for Andrew Benstede in 1486.⁴

¹ For him and some other Benstedes, see *Notes and Queries*, CLXVIII, 123.

² Blomfield, *Norfolk*, VIII, 288. ³ *Notes and Queries*, *op. cit.* ⁴ *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, *Hen. VII*, I, 463-66.

Scale



PLAN OF BENINGTON CASTLE, HERTS.

BENSTEDE FAMILY

John de Benstede, rector of Little Berkhamstead, Herts, 1297-1310; (1) = Beatrice, dau. of = (2) John de Blounville
 bought Benington, Herts, 1303, and Higham Balliol, Walthamstow, Robert de Gravele Lord of Graveley
 1305, from Alexander de Balliol; and Waterhall, Walthamstow, 1306-7, (d. c. 1311, bur. Manor, Herts
 from Richard de Betuyné Watton, Herts) d. 1337
 d. 1336-7

Isabella (1) = John, Justiciar; bought Harpesfield Hall, 1316; = (2) Petronilla, dau. of Henry Grapynel
 Herons, 1315-16; Chewells, 1317-18. (d. 1297) and widow of John
 Died 1323. Fitz John Fitz Simon (d. 1303).
 Born 1275, died 1342

Edmund = Matilda William o.s.p. = Agnes, dau. and heir of Walter Guy John Margaret = ? Humphrey
 b. 1312, d. 1380 de Nevill. She married de Walden
 d. 1334-5 (2) Thomas de Fythlynges the younger
 1325-6

John, 1332-58, = Petronilla Moyne, Edmund
 bur. Benington d. 1378

John, Alice (c. 1384) (1) = Sir Edward, b. 1355; = (2) (before 1402) Joan, John, living 1389,
 b. 1353, o.s.p. 1366 (c. 1384) (1) = Sir Edward, b. 1355; = (2) (before 1402) Joan, dau. of Sir John
 M.P. 1384-1402, sheriff Essex and Herts Thornbury, of
 1400; d. 1432, bur. Benington Little Munden, Herts.
 She died 1448

Sir Edmund, = Eleanor, John Elizabeth, (1) = Sir Edward, = (2) (?) Joan, Robert, Margaret Alice Petronilla
 b. bef. 1389, d. 1438 d. 1451 b. bef. 1389, dau. of Ralph, b. bef. 1389, dau. of (?) Joan, b. bef. 1401,
 d. bef. 1401 well and widow of Sir John Clifton (d. 1388). She d. 1393-4. Edmonds, and widow of William
 1401 of Sir John Greville 1429

Ralph, d. bef. 1438 = Agnes
 father, 1438

Sir John, = Margery, d. 1488.
 1438-71 She married
 (2) William Bowley
 d. 1485

Eleanor
 b. 1435

Sir Edward, b. 1423,
 living 1470, bur. St.
 Peter's, St. Albans
 (? Master of the Game)

William, = a dau. of
 b. 1454, William
 o.s.p. Bowley
 1485

Sir Edward, (1) =
 d. 1518, bur.
 Hertingford-
 bury

Joyce, dau. of Sir Ed-
 mund Sutton *alias*
 Dudley. She married
 (2) William Purdee
 d. bef. 1541

(?) William
 living 1513,
 d. by 1518

John, b. 1455:
 d. Abbot of
 Whitby,
 1514

Katherine, =
 d. bef. 1518

John
 Ferrers
 of St.
 Albans

Children d. young,
 bur. Herting-
 fordbury

William Purdee, = Elizabeth
 d. 1557

John Purdee,
 living 1557

Margaret =
 Sir John Brocket
 d. 1558; bur. Whetham-
 stead

John Alice

DE VALOIGNES AND BALLIOL FAMILIES

Peter de Valoignes = Albreda, sister of Eudo Dapifer
living 1108: sheriff
of Essex and Herts

Roger, = Agnes FitzJohn,
d. 1141-2 | survived husband William

Peter, = Gundreda
o.s.p. de
1158 Warente

Robert, = Hawise, d.
d. 1184 | by 1190

Geoffrey, = Emma du
lord of Hommet,
Burton, s.p.
Yorks, 1175-89, o.s.p. ?
d. 1190

Roger, lord of
Easter Kilbride,
1175-89, o.s.p. ?

John

Philip, went to Scotland, lord
of Pannure : Chamberlain
of Scotland 1196-1215 : d.
Nov. 5, 1215, bur. Melrose
Abbey. After his brother
Geoffrey's death he held Bur-
ton manor, Yorks, during the
minority of his niece Gunnora

Durand de Ostilli (1) = Gunnora, = (2) before 1199, Robert FitzWalter = (2) Roes
m. c. 1190; d. by heir to her d. 1233: bur. Dunmow Priory
1194 uncle
Geoffrey;
d. before
18 Nov.
1220

William, =
of Pannure, dau. of
Chamberlain Saher de Quincy,
of Scotland, Earl of
1215-19: d. 1219 :
bur. Melrose Abbey Winchester

William de Mandeville (1) =
2nd Earl of Essex;
d. before 19 Jan.
1226-7; s.p.

Christiana = (2) Reymund de Burgh,
s.p.: d. before d. before 17 July
25 May 1233 1230

Walter FitzWalter,
d. 1258: bur.
Dunmow Priory

Lora, = Henry de Balliol,
d. before Chamberlain of
1272 Scotland, 1223-9,
and 1241-6
d. before 1272.

Isabella, = David Cumin,
lady of or Comyn,
Easter d. before 1253
Kilbride, d. 1253

Christianiana, = Peter de Maule
of or Maune
Pannure

Robert,
aged 10
in 1258

Guy,
killed at
Evesham
1265

Alexander, = Isabella de
lord of Chilham,
Cavers, widow of
Chamber- David,
lain of Earl of
Scotland, Athol.
1287-94 She d.
1292

William
Comyn,
alias
De Valoignes,
aged 16 or 17
in 1253



APR 75



N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA

